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Official  Magazine

Issue 11: February 2001

# Dreamcast™

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Online Game Ever!

> Hands-on Report

## Dreamcast 2?

Sega's Future  
Plans Revealed!

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**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE**



**JAPAN'S FORBIDDEN GAMES**

**FROM GEEK TO CHIC**



**30**

**FEATURES**

MANY PAGES WITH MANY WORDS—SWEAT TILL YOU BLEED, SUCKAS.

**>FORBIDDEN GAMES 22**

**ODCM** took a peek behind Japan's Hello Kitty curtain of cute—and what we saw made us blush. Enjoy this glimpse of the Japanese games you'll never get to play

**>FROM GEEK TO CHIC 30**

Gaming's transition from geek fetish to mainstream billion-dollar industry has taken less than ten years; and it all began with a little blue hedgehog

**>PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 34**

Online and on target? **ODCM** hits exclusive, hands-on payroll; and you get the verdict

**>DCDIRECT 12**  
 NEWS, PREVIEWS AND GOSSIP

**COMING SOON**

IF THE FUTURE WAS NOW, WE COULD STOP HYPING AND START COMPLAINING

**FLOIGAN BROTHERS 44**

Wackiness in spades: Visual Concepts' latest jewel is laden with more slap than you can shake a stick at. **ODCM** spends some quality time with the Floi polli

**18-WHEELER 46**

When Big Trucks Attack! Get the skinny on Sega's latest Naomi arcade port. Large Marge, Kevin Bacon, trucker slang and other assorted goods

**SONIC ADVENTURE 2 48**

The rambunctious rodent returns for another spin around the block. And if what we've played so far is any indication, this is going to be one of 2001's best games.

**PROJECT JUSTICE 50**

No, it isn't Gee Dub Bush's new capital punishment program. It's the sequel to *Rival Schools*, one of the most beloved fighting games in recent memory. With school-girls...



**FIGHTING VIPERS 2 52**

Just when you thought it was dead, the *AK2* classic returns to your Dreamcast. Not since Willis Reed returned for Game 7 of the 1970 NBA finals has there been a comeback like this

**HEAD HUNTER 54**

After many months of secrecy surrounding its newest Mission Impossible-style game, Sega lets the cat out of the bag. Or, actually, they only let us peek our heads inside the bag for a few seconds to check out the cat. Here's what we saw before the dang thing scratched us

**ALIEN FRONT ONLINE 56**

**ODCM** takes another look at what is easily one of our most eagerly-anticipated titles. It's got all sorts of things we like: Big tanks to drive, big cities to destroy, big buildings to crumble, big technologies to employ (online multiplayer, real-time voice, etc.)—big hit in the making

**TYPING OF THE DEAD 58**

Maxis Beacon meets House of the Dead in one of the most excitingly inauspicious gameplay premises in the history of videogames. Amazingly, it's already great—but kids, can you type "c-a-r-p-a-l t-o-n-n-e-s-y-n-d-r-o-m-e"?

"I never lose."

**DEPARTMENTS**

**>DC-ROM 8**

If it doesn't work, don't give up and start using our shiny, pretty demo disc as a coaster. We're off! We know you hate cleaning, but does it make it more fun if we tell you that you can spit on it first?

**>D-MAIL 10**

You ask, we answer. The only problem with getting so much wonderful mail from so many wonderful people is that it reminds us of how many wonderful jobs there are, in this wonderful world, which contain long stretches of free time that can be filled up by writing emails, stretching, napping, eating and peeing. But don't worry—we're too busy creating **ODCM** to go out and find 'em!

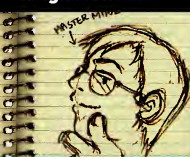
**>TZ-ARCHIVE 80**

Every game we've ever played. Ratat!

**>ENDZONE 94**

**ODCM**'s exclusive *TalkBack* interview series opens with our candid tête-à-tête with the creators of *Soul Reaver 2*. Just how great will this game be? Find out!

## Mr. Charla's neighborhood



### WELL, THE HOLIDAYS ARE

behind us (well, as I write this they haven't actually started, but by the time you read it they should be just wrapping up).

Anyway, I could go on about the huge number of killer hits that shipped for Dreamcast this season, but that would be gloating. But what the hell, let's gloat: *Shenmue*, *Jet Grind Radio*, *Test Drive Le Mans*, *StarLancer*, *Grandia II*, *Skies of Arcadia*, *Tony Hawk 2*, *NFL 2K1*, *NBA 2K1*, *Quake 3 Arena*, *Smash de Amigo*. And those are just the games that got 25 or 10s. Plus, of course, we got the world's first online console gaming 1EP.

So, What do we have to look forward to in 2001? First, all the awesome games that slipped: *Unreal Tournament*, *Half-Life*, *Half-Life Multiplayer* and *Metropolis Street Racer*. Then, in January, we're going to get the earth-shattering *Phantasy Star Online* (see our Cover Story on page 36). (Note: If you never see another issue, it's because we got too addicted to PSO.)

Beyond that, Sega—at its recent Executive Games Summit—announced (in addition to giving us the dirt on the future of the Dreamcast platform; see page 12) that it had between 30 and 45 titles planned for 2001. Holy crap! Forty-five SEGA games? Clearly this company is out to get every single dollar in our pockets, and every single second of our spare time.

And I for one, couldn't be happier! When the world's greatest game company tells you that it could potentially be coming out with three new games every month, well, it's pretty clear that the future for Dreamcast in 2001 is going to be pretty damn rosy.

One last thing: After a successful test run, next year, ODCM plans to take RPG Day national. It's the Friday after Thanksgiving. No work. The malls are packed. The movie theaters are packed. Your house is full of food. Solution: get up early, make yourself a sandwich, pop in that RPG you've been meaning to beat and get to it. In 2001, this Day falls on Friday, November 23. Plan on it.

Later,  
Chris



# 62



NBA 2K1



SURF ROCKET RACERS



READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

# 74

## >TESTZONE

HYPER? HIP? WE PLAY THEM ALL SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO. REVIEWED:

### NBA 2K1 62

Everything you love about your favorite sport and the NBA is present and accounted for (except for Jack Nicholson hitting outside at the Laker games).

### READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 66

He the inimitable Evan Shamon says, "No kicking!" This might be boxing for the masses, but it's still boxing...and it's still named fun.

### HOYLE CASINO 68

You don't have to be 21 to play it. You can play it all night. There's even some cleavage to be ogled in this gameroom, thanks to Hoyle's NPCs. Of course, such pleasures always come at a price...

### MS. PAC MAN 72

If it's your first time playing Ms. Pac Man, welcome to the magic. If it's your second (or second millionth) time around, you'll know that the magic never fades...and neither do the ghosts, unless you eat 'em.

### SPEC OPS II:

### OMEGA 73

PC + ROTC + DC OT? ODCM RSVPs. Ever wonder why we often groan automatically whenever we hear (or say) the word "port?" This game gives a pretty good demonstration of some big reasons

### SURF ROCKET RACERS 74

Surfing! Rocketing! Racing! No, these aren't the ingredients of the best damned tuna casserole you've ever had (although they could be). They make a good game: almost.

### SUPER RUNABOUT:

### SAN FRANCISCO EDITION 76

Rice-a-Roni is henceforth replaced as the San Francisco treat. Mmmmmmm Yummy.

### RESIDENT EVIL 2 77

Bigger, better, faster zombies! And you didn't think it could get better...oh, palaw.

### BANG! 78

A game that brings along its own exclamation point, like a little suitcase full of joy. Or not. It's definitely full of something...

### KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS:

### THE NIGHTMARE CHILD 79

Two words: Not. Online. Two more words: Big. Shoes. This game offers the closest onscreen representation of Dina's shoes that ODCM has ever seen. We're not kidding. And neither is Dina.



RESIDENT EVIL 2 77

# Dreamcast

## >HOWTO 82

MORE CODES THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A GAMESHARK AT!

## MAKE YOUR OWN 16-PAGE CODEBOOK!

You've heard us call our HowTo section "Absolutely Code-tacular" before—and we weren't lying. Well, this time when we say that it's Absolutely Code-tacular, we're lying even less! We've listened to the subsonic screams of your code-jones, and pretty much ignored it for a long time. Not because we didn't care; we just didn't have the space to print more codes. Well, get ready to be really, really happy (and to stop screaming, too)...ever wonder why you didn't have a girlfriend?—we're going to give you ALL the codes, and ALL the directions you'll need to cut, fold and staple your own 16-PAGE CODEBOOK! Total satisfaction guaranteed: you'll never feel the need to buy another Lotto ticket.

And how many games are included in the index of this wonderbooklet? Well, we want it to be a surprise. But we'll give you a hint: there aren't less than 75...

PlayStation 2

SOMETIMES, IN ORDER  
TO COMPLETE YOUR JOURNEY,  
YOU HAVE TO GO BACK  
TO ITS BEGINNING.

LEGACY OF KAIN  
SOUL REAVER 2



Dreamcast



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woven together by fate, each shall rise  
to face their destiny. ♫



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**Official Dreamcast Magazine**

"...undeniably the prettiest role-playing game ever to grace a console."

**[www.dailyradar.com](http://www.dailyradar.com)**

"...this will indeed be the first epic RPG on Dreamcast."

**[www.ign.com](http://www.ign.com)**

"Grandia II is easily the most impressive next-generation RPG we've seen, and the first true RPG epic for a next-generation console."

**[www.thegia.com](http://www.thegia.com)**

"Take a new look at what is surely the best-looking RPG yet on a next-generation console..."

**Gamer's Republic Online**

"...set to give sub-par developers a lesson in how to do a DC RPG right."

**GameFan Magazine**

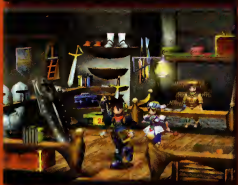
"Any RPG fan would be insane to miss out on this fantastic gameplay experience and it could go far in converting those who previously rode the RPG fence."

**GamerWeb.com**

"If you want your copy of Grandia 2 this holiday season, don't expect Santa's little elves to make you a special copy, pre-order it now or you may not get it until late January."

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*Critically acclaimed and over 2 years  
in the making, Grandia™ II  
arrives December 2000.*



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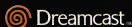




With the Phantasy Star Online instant translator, you can choose from hundreds of words and phrases to communicate with online gamers around the world. You enter, "Help me! I don't want to die!" Your teammate in Japan sees: "助けてくれえ。死にたかねえよ。" It's just one of the advanced features on the next generation of the legendary Phantasy Star series. Phantasy Star Online will immerse you in the most complete role-playing experience possible—not to mention what it'll do for your vocabulary.



[sega.com/phantasysonline](http://sega.com/phantasysonline)



# THE SEVEN SAMURAI

That's what we call the six fancy-kickin' demos and one maverick vid on this disc. This is some of the best stuff that Japanese and American developers have to offer: riding the cutting edge of this century's wave of innovation.

So just when you thought that your loved ones were all out of presents, **ODCM** has ripped you a brand spiggidy spankin' new one. Hot off the presses, here comes the stuff that makes your Dreamcast sing—exclusive sneak peeks at levels from **Metropolis Street Racer** (balls-out racing in hyper-realistic environments: if we had to name the game that we get most questions about from fellow game jounos, this would be it. It could be the title that finally makes Dan stop saying "Best. Game. Ever." about **F355 Challenge**), **Outtrigger** (first-person shooter from the Land of the Rising Sun), **18 Wheeler: American Pro Truck** (big trucks, big wheels, big game), **Max Steel** (third-person adventuring to the max) and **4x4 Evolution** (more SUVs than a Nordstrom parking lot). Plus we've got a brand new web browser—**Version 2.6**, complete with mouse support. It even comes with Sega's new DreamCall application (see **DCDirect** page 16 for details, which allows you to make free long distance phone calls to anyone in the world. So now you can talk to all of your fellow Dreamcasters in Lisbon and Bora Bora.

As an added bonus for this issue, we've also got **Jurassic 5's** newest video for you to check out—this disc is so fresh we almost don't want to give it away. Just be sure to read our directions (at right) for cleaning the disc!



## 18 WHEELER: AMERICAN PRO TRUCKER PUB: SEGA RELEASE JAN PLAYERS 1



Take Sega's new trucking sim for a spin and see what it's like to cruise the highway with double-digit wheels (18 to be precise). Also, see what it's like to crush the cars that get in your way, barrel over trees and race against a diabolical enemy named Lizard Tail. The demo takes you for a ride you won't soon forget.

- |              |             |            |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Stick: Steer | Reverse     | Brake      |
| D-Pad: Steer | Horn        | Accelerate |
| Shift        | Change View |            |

## METROPOLIS STREET RACER PUB: SEGA RELEASE JANUARY PLAYERS 1-2



Distinctly European and distinctly awesome, MSR has been a long time coming. If you've been with us from the beginning, you'll know what we mean. Race either against the clock or against another car through the streets of swirly London. The game was recently delayed until January, so try it early on your trusty **ODCM** demo disc.

- |              |               |         |
|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Stick: Steer | Assist Select | Brake   |
| D-Pad: Steer | N/A           | Forward |
| N/A          | Assist On/Off |         |

## MAX STEEL PUBLISHER: N/A RELEASE NOVEMBER PLAYERS 1



Venture through the jungle and hit p some unsuspecting evil folk in our exclusive demo of Max Steel. You're armed to the teeth with some sweet weapons, and there are even a couple of interesting puzzles to solve. Give it a spin and let us know what you think. We know what we think; that's why it's on the demo disc.

- |                       |           |               |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Stick: Move Character | Punch     | Side Step     |
| D-Pad: Move Character | Shoot     | Close-Up View |
| Jump                  | Tail Whip |               |

## BROWSER 2.6 SEGA EXCLUSIVE



Greatest. Browser. Ever. The latest, greatest version of the Dreamcast browser features, for the first time, **MOUSE SUPPORT**! No longer must you use the analog stick, or worse, the D-pad to scroll around like some kind of second-class netizen. Add the keyboard, and you are a fully-outfitted Web surfer. Plus: use DreamCall and your Dreamcast to phone friends for free!

## OUTTRIGGER PUBLISHER: SEGA RELEASE JAN PLAYERS 1-2



Sega's attempt to out-gun the Quake/Unreal/Half-Life FPS landscape. Outtrigger is nothing if not hell-a fun. Blast your way through four crazy-as-hell stages of action, killing swarms of bad guys and getting to try out a bunch of weapons in the process. Try it from the first-person POV for the optimal experience.

- |                  |                     |              |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Stick: Look view | Zoom (first person) | Strafe left  |
| D-Pad: Move      | Change weapon       | Strafe right |
| Fire weapon      | Jump                |              |

## 4X4 EVOLUTION PUBLISHER: GIGAWATT RELEASE OCTOBER PLAYERS 1



If you thought 4-Wheel Thunder was the cream of the big-wheel crop, well, give 4x4 Evolution a shot. It's got lots of dirt, cool vehicles and big vehicles, and should provide you with at least an afternoon's worth of entertainment. It's also one of the prettier drives you'll take on your Dreamcast: so if aesthetics are your bag, give it a shot.

- |                           |             |            |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Stick: Steer              | N/A         | Reverse    |
| D-Pad: Up: reset position | Brake       | Accelerate |
| N/A                       | Change view |            |

## JURASSIC 5: QUALITY CONTROL PUBLISHER: SEGA RELEASE OCTOBER PLAYERS 1



Just when you thought **ODCM** had given you everything you could possibly want, we drop the new J5 video on your unsuspecting heads. It's Quality Control, the tie track from their latest LP. Bounce to it. And what does it have to do with Dreamcast? It sounds suspiciously like a song from one of our fave soundtracks...

- |            |     |            |
|------------|-----|------------|
| Stick: N/A | N/A | Reverse    |
| D-Pad: N/A | N/A | Accelerate |
| N/A        | N/A |            |

## HAVING TROUBLE?

Having problems getting your disc to run? Don't get one with your copy of this fine and outstanding publication! Send your name, mailing address, subscription number (if you are a subscriber), and the issue's date to: [dischelp@imaginemedia.com](mailto:dischelp@imaginemedia.com) and provide a brief description of what's wrong with the disc as well. **IMPORTANT!** This contact address is not for game news or information. If you have questions concerning game codes, information or Dreamcast news, please refer your inquiries to Sega or the appropriate third party.

**Help: [dischelp@imaginemedia.com](mailto:dischelp@imaginemedia.com)**



# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

(and your demo disc)



We pride ourselves on good customer service, which is why we want to take the time to show you how to fix up a reluctant demo disc—or any CD, GD, or DVD-ROM for that matter. Got a disc that won't give up the goods? Before you trash it, microwave it, shatter it, run it over with your car or send it to Al Gore—or call the company to ask for a replacement that you just know will take forever to get to you—check out our handy-dandy guide to making disc problems go away as fast as Evan's hairline.

**Important disclaimer thingy:** You can scratch your discs and ruin them if you do this wrong. Proceed at your own risk. Look at this as a last resort, not normal disc maintenance.



**Step 1:** Acquire some Windex, or another mild glass cleaner (you can even cut it 50% with water). Now, find a clean, soft, piece of cotton cloth, like an old T-shirt. Don't use polyester or terrycloth—and for godskakes, do not ever use a paper towel! Using anything but cotton could scratch the disc and make things worse. Spray a bit of cleaner onto the cotton.



**Step 2:** This is definitely the trickiest part of the cleaning process. Don't pat, don't dab, don't stroke, and don't scratch: use your cloth to rub in a straight line, from the center outward. Do not, not, not, rub in a circular motion around the disc—that will really mess things up. About ten to twelve rubs should cover the whole disc.



**Step 3:** The insertion. Let the disc dry (about ten minutes). Now that you've cleaned your disc, the last thing you want to do is get your grubby, greasy little fingers all over it so please! Do what Evan does in this picture, and hold it gently by the edges. Slide it into place in your Dreamcast and close the cover. And there it is! You're good to go.

## It's not just the Disc, you see...

Okay, folks, it's about time we gave you a nice, quick refresher course on the display options for your Dreamcast. There are four ways to get video out of your Dreamcast and onto your TV. Here's a rundown:

**RF Adapter:** This is for attaching your DC to old-school TVs: you know, those wood-esque paneled sets. You actually have to buy a special adapter to use an RF adapter; this is by far the worst option. Things are blurry. Stay away.

**Composite Cables:** The standard AV cables that come with the system, these deliver pretty good results.

**S-Video Cables:** A little pricier, but if your TV has S-Video inputs, you'll be amazed at just how crisp and clean the graphics look with this cable.

**VGA Box:** The ultimate. This \$40 box lets you play Dreamcast on a super-crisp VGA monitor display. It looks great, but all DC games aren't compatible with the VGA box, sadly.



# Team ODCM

**WHAT A MONTH!** Between *Shenmue*, *Jet Grind Radio*, *Test Drive Le Mans* and the *Phantasy Star Online* preview build (and a few discos along the way) and here we are, we frankly didn't get around to actually writing the magazine until just around. Still, the end result was pretty good in our opinion, and we think you'll agree. It's the darkest time of the year, so we decided to ask everyone this month just which games give them the strength to carry on when things look terrible...



**CHRIS CHARLA**  
Editor-in-Chief  
When the going gets tough, the tough get going. And once all of those tough people have left the room, Chris quickly slides in *Test Drive Le Mans* for a little Prototype Enduro action. He claims that he can now actually race the Bmo track blindfolded, including pit stops. Next steps mean the entire Shuiki GP track in reverse, and win.



**DAN FITZPATRICK**  
Art Director  
Dan prefers the action of *Quake 3* to get out the aggression when he's feeling tense. A former hobbyist level designer, he's currently hoarding a *Planescape* laptop under his desk, and enjoys playing *Quake* with Evan plays online. Evan, sadly, isn't much better at *Quake* than he was at NFL 2K1. You see.



**DINA FAYER**  
Managing Editor  
No one's ever accused Dina of being compassionate, so it's no surprise that she heads right off the deep end when she's up for choosing the impossible cute and simple *Parson* Traction to get her groove back. "There's just something about that one-button gameplay and the way it drives everyone else nuts!" she says.



**FRANCESCA REYES**  
Senior Editor  
For Fran, bad moods actually mean that she plays away from games toward the big baseball bat and she keeps by her desk. "Hey Fran... we're in a good... just get down the bat..." No, we're just kidding; she actually goes back to all the other... she's heart and works to finally finish every single side quest and to level up as high as possible.



**DAVE CORDON**  
Associate Art Director  
Dave's new favorite game is *Chicken Run*. "I just love making the chickens get caught," he says gleefully. Dave, as you'll remember from past issues, is a man who's motto is "A chicken in my pot, every single night." He's also known to sleep at the office. (Hilarity, with electrical tape) for an intense *Samurai* session.



**EVAN SHAMMOON**  
Associate Editor  
Evan is all about *Ray Hawk's Pro* *Boxer 2*. It's that truck by *Rage* against the Machine combined with the hip clothes, we think, the use for hours, and now that he's mastered the gap-to-manual-grip skill, he is practically unstoppable. It's fun to watch him beat Blake from *Next Gen* that improves everyone's spirits!

# LETTER OF THE MONTH

## InterNOT Gaming

First off, I want to congratulate all of you for the great effort on the magazine. It is safe to say that you guys produce the first magazine that is official but still delivers the goods without being biased. It is also safe to say that I like the tier DO is beating the odds and hanging around for the battle against PS2. And a tough battle it will be.

The reason I am writing is to see your opinion on how console gaming is evolving into a vast internet dominance. I may not be the oldest gamer (I'm 13), but ladies and gentlemen, I have experienced everything there is to possibly experience in videogaming for my age, and things cannot get much better than they are now. I am quite an old-school gamer, and when I hear all this about console gaming's future going completely online I click me. I even read somewhere that the next-generation *Tomb Raider* is going to have you buying levels monthly on the Internet. Now, I don't know about you, but I believe the point of console gaming is to sit back, relax with a controller in your hand, and to play a game to a point in the night where your eyes close over and your fingers don't get tired from typing on a keyboard. If I want online games I sit down at my \$2000 PC and really experience online gaming. Do not get me wrong, I have an open mind to any future online possibilities, but I think gaming should stay where it is.

Tim Sullivan  
Via email

PS: Let us all bow our heads in a moment of silence for the arrival of *Shenmue*.

## Speed Freak

All right, dear friends at ODCM, here's the deal, I share dumbstruck at your articles on *Phantasy Star Online* and mutter things unconsciously like "must have." But strangely enough, I am also fighting a phone company who refuses to give me better than a dialup phone line. I can only connect at 26.4 Kbps with an 56K modem! Fun!

So I want to get cable, and I cry because I can't have cable and won't be able to dial in to play *Phantasy Star Online*. But I am employed to find a LAN adapter allowing me to use cable with my Dreamcast in your mag's Tech section [ODCM #9]. I must have it and I search everywhere I can for information on this goodness. I'm a gamer and a techie. I can make the Net actually tell me things instead of barfing out garbage about cooling better with potato oil or vodka (in my most recent article) election but I get nothing. Nada. Zich. Even *DayAfterRaid*com seems to think the adapter is some kind of party event going on in Colorado! Don't tease me. Where is it?

Mike Dunning  
Via email

Mike, Sega has announced that it will be releasing the broadband adapter, which is basically an ethernet card that replaces the built-in DO modem, to the US market in January. The \$50 part will allow you to use your Dreamcast with a DSL or other broadband connection.

Interestingly, Sega's ISP, SegaNet, will not be offering DSL. If you want to play Sega games online using a DSL or cable connection, you'll have to sign up with a third-party ISP that offers it. But since SegaNet already promises awesome speed, most people won't need to bother.

## Gain Grounded

A friend of mine was searching on the Internet and came across a rumor that one of the greatest games of all time, *Gain Ground*, is coming to Dreamcast. I couldn't believe it so I went on the Net to do a little searching myself, but to no avail. Is it just a rumor? Or is *Gain Ground* really coming out on DC? And someone should develop a game based on the peripatetic RPG *Car Wars*. I would rock. Imagine driving around in armored cars packed to the core with weapons!

This is a hard call, Tim. There's no denying that online is where this industry is headed, but at the same time, it all depends on the quality of the games themselves. Whether a game is meant for offline or online play, if a game is solid and programmed expertly for what it is, it will stand as a classic experience. But if a game incorporates "throwaway" online capabilities just to cash in on the trend, then the potential is clearly wasted.

The ODCM staff is somewhat divided, in a sense, on the issue. Certain games, like first person shooters, real-time strategy and sports games have been more developed in the online arena, and have been tried and tested in head-to-head play. On PCs, online RPGs like *Baldur's Gate* and *Everquest* are also fine examples of how multiplayer adventure games can be done well. Online RPGs will not replace single-player games, but will instead become their own sub-genre within the larger spectrum of RPGs.

So don't worry that all games will be going online any time soon or even in the future. It will take some time to iron out the flaws, but multiplayer games shouldn't be underestimated—they provide an amazing experience that often cannot be matched without the element of human interaction. It's true. Facing off against a real human gamer adds that extra element of spontaneity and insurance that are nowhere to be found when you're fighting a CPU controlled "bot." We're really excited to watch the dawn of a new movement that has so much potential.

They could even throw in side missions like deliveries or something, if they want.

Ryan Farrell  
farrell196@yahoo.com, cortland.edu

Hey, Ryan, it's good to hear that classic games are still remembered by DC owners. Unfortunately, a sequel or remake of *Renovation's* *Gain Ground*, which debuted on the Genesis in 1991, is more rumor than anything else. We haven't heard anything on this title with regard to companies working on "secret projects." But if we hear anything about it, our readers will be the first to know.

As for a "car RPG," Riptide's upcoming *Gorka Morka* is being touted as a type of vehicular combat/RPG with upgradeable cars which are fairly interactive. We have yet to test the game, but we'll have the reviews, but you can bet we'll be checking it out in an upcoming issue.

## Soliloquel

I keep hearing all these rumors about Sega and Nintendo forming a joint company. What does this mean and is it going to happen?

Are there any sequels coming for *Jet Grind Radio* or *Guts* *Rage: Sword of the Berserk*?

Are there any *Mega Man* or *Time Crisis* games coming? Kevin Cappa  
kcmvcpa614@hotmail.com

While we're unsure what's actually going on behind closed doors, what's on record is that the original news story was a mis-translation of what the actual message was. In sum, the real deal was an announcement stating that a high-level executive had been named as Sega from a position in which he worked with Nintendo in the near future. Although the company's plans to do hand-held gaming (see DC Direct page 13) do give some tantalizing hints...

It's long been rumored that *Jet Grind* will be receiving a sequel which will feature online and multiplayer modes, but again—Sega has said nothing about it. And as for *Sword of the Berserk*, neither ASCII nor Yuke's has plans for a sequel.

ILLUSTRATIONS: NASKA C.



For now, there are no plans for any MegaMan games from Capcom on DC. The same goes for a *Time Crisis* title from Namco on DC. Bummer, huh? But, who knows what announcements lay around the corner, but we'll keep you informed if anything changes.

## Original Sims

Is there any chance of Sega bringing either Emergency Call Ambulance or Jambol Safari to Dreamcast? Both these games rule in the arcade and it would totally rock if awesome if I could play them on my DC.

Eto Average

DarkLotusNINJA@aol.com

The news is grim so far on these two titles ever making it to DC. B to Sega's spokesperson claim that it has to do with the technology difference between the arcade versions of Emergency Call Ambulance and Jambol Safari and the DC. Apparently, neither of the arcade titles is actually on the DC-friendly NADMI board, but something different such as the Model 3, dual NADMI or the mysterious Hikaru board. But Sega is still evaluating the titles for port to see if it might be worth it. We won't definitely be writing it up in these pages if there's hope on the horizon.



This game makes San Diego's Wild Animal Park look tame.

## Kill Your Television

I have had a Dreamcast for about nine months now and I love it—except for one small thing. We own a 50-inch TV and when the system is loading everything seems fine. When the game is ready to play, about two inches of the picture is chopped off all the way down the left-hand side of the screen. I assumed it had something to do with the projection TV, but when we hooked it up to the bedroom TV (32 inch) it did the same thing. Is this a system flaw? Every game I own for DC does this. Any help in explaining this phenomenon would be appreciated.

Jeffrey

j.jones2@att.net

We're unsure if the problem you're having is stemming from your system or from using the system on a projection TV. We've played our DCs on big-screen televisions, but never on screens larger than 40 inches (we'd like to remind you, by the way, that it's okay to have friends who own smaller TVs than yours). You may want to check with Sega's tech support line (800-USA-SEGA) for help on the matter as it might be something wrong with your specific Dreamcast system. An even better solution, of course, is to send your faulty 50-inch screen to us—we'll be happy to send you our perfectly functional and far-more-portable TV in return! That way, everyone wins.

## Four Word Letter

I go online with my Dreamcast a lot and I was wondering if in order to play the online games (like NBA2K1) do I have to sign up for Segaflex or can I use my own ISP?

Will an updated version of the Web Browser 2.0 ever come out? And if so what will its capabilities?

In ODCM #64 there was an article about

THQ's plans to release VirtuaStriker 2000 for DC in the fall. I haven't seen it yet and I was wondering if there are still plans to release the game? And when is Dreamcast going to come out?

Brice Beck

bb\_tecoon23@yahoo.com

You don't need Segaflex in order to play any of the Dreamcast online games, but you do need an ISP. Whether it's

Segaflex, Earthlink or something else, you should have no problem getting your game on across the network.

Look no further than the ODCM demo disc smuggled tightly in with this very issue. Btw! The latest demo includes Voice Over IP software and other various upgrades for your DC browsing needs.

We've never confirmed that THQ would be bringing over VirtuaStriker 2000 to Dreamcast; we were merely suggesting that that might be the wrestling title loaded for DC on the THQ disk. The mystery wrestling game for DC ended up being WWF Royal Rumble, instead, and the company has no plans to release any more DC wrestling games beyond this. Sorry for any confusion.

We'd sure as heck would like to know when Dreamcast is coming out for DC, as well. Btw! It's been postponed and delayed since its original release date of July 2000, and the company has been very hard to pin down in regards to specific date. Therefore, it's wait and see situation for now. We just hope that they get it out sometime within the coming months, but we'll keep you posted.

## Baldur's Wait

Before I first got my DC, I read in a pre-release book of some kind about Baldur's Gate coming to DC, but other than that, I haven't heard a peep about it. Do you know if it will be coming to DC at all? Thanks a lot.

Aaron Greshinger

adgt36crosswinds.net

Bad news, Aaron! While the PC RPG phenomenon as one of Bizarre's Baldur's Gate was originally planned as one of DC's first online epics, it's since been cancelled. But, fortunately, there are other online RPGs on the way, like Fantasy Star Online and FarNation, so don't fret!

## Trigger Happy

Does the MacCatz DreamBaster lightgun work for Silent Scope on Dreamcast or do you have to use the original controller? Or will some third party peripheral make either a whole new gun?

RED46002@aol.com

Unfortunately, RED, none of the DC lightguns, licensed or not, work with Silent Scope. In fact, Silent Scope is not a lightgun shooter in the House of the Dead 2 sense, its arcade counterpart uses a specially made sniper peripheral that has no real edge in land of console alternatives, so you'll have to depend on your trusty DC controller to do your shooting for you.



## A New Chapter

How many chapters of Shenmue are there going to be for DC? Somebody told me there were going to be 20, but that sounds like too many. What's the real deal?

I know almost nothing about Segaflex except that you can play games online and send email. Any advice to surf the internet too, just like on a computer with another ISP?

When is ESPN Baseball Tonight coming out? It was supposed to come out in April, then August, then November. Now when is it going to be released?

Eric

Via email

Shenmue is a play-by-year sort of series according to the game's creator, Yu Suzuki. Supposedly, every "chapter" of the game can be held up as a stand-alone product, but the grand plan is to produce 16 complete chapters. But don't get the number wrong. Eric, "16 chapters" doesn't necessarily translate into 16 separate games. In fact, it's rumored that segaels would incorporate multiple chapters rather than one single chapter (like Shenmue Chapter 1—Yokosuka). Sorry if this is confusing, but this is basically where the series stands. Hope it answers your question.

Segaflex is a fully functioning ISP with email, Internet

browsing abilities and online gaming. No virtual store is left untamed if you have it and you can use Segaflex as your primary ISP.

According to Konami, ESPN Baseball Tonight has been postponed until next year, perhaps to coincide with the start of the baseball season. We'll keep you updated.

## Chat Room

When will the new DC microphone (and long distance) come out in the US, sold separately from Seamen?

When will 18 Wheeler American ProTrucker be coming out?

I heard that in the upcoming Soul Reaver 2, you get to suck blood instead of souls. Is this true?

Corey

corey111@hotmail.com

The DC microphone should be out in stores in a separate package from Seamen right now!

Can't wait to get trucker? Read our full preview of 18 Wheeler in Coming Soon and then start saving. The game hits stores in just another month or two.

That's just crazy oldschool vampire propaganda you've been hearing. Corey, SR2 has Raziel sucking souls, like always, so don't believe the hype.

Four out of five reviewers say that souls taste better than blood, anyway.

## The College Try

I have been playing Dreamcast for quite a while now, and I have to say that NFL 2K1 is the greatest sports game ever (personally). It's the best game I've ever played in any genre. From what I've seen of Madden 2001 on PS2, NFL 2K1 blows it out of the water. But here's my question: As Visual Concepts ever going to make the college football game? If they are capable of producing a game as great as NFL 2K1, surely they could do it again with a college game.

Are they having trouble obtaining permission from the NCAA? I work at a software store here in Louisville and have already been asked by at least five or six people about a future NCAA game. Same goes with NBA 2K1 and a possible college basketball game. Just wondering if you have heard anything about college sports games. Thanks, and keep up the good work!

Brent Willard  
Louisville, KY

At this moment in time, we're sad to report that Sega has no plans in the immediate future for any college sports games via Visual Concepts, but this isn't to say that another third-party publisher doesn't have some plans in the works that they're not currently talking about. We just haven't heard a thing regarding NCAA games on Dreamcast, which seems a shame since they're just as popular as pro sports games. It's a wait and see situation, Brent, so stay tuned.

## A LITTLE TO THE WRITE

A little goes a long way, and a lot goes even further. So, get scribbled and send DCM all your fits of Dreamcast fancy in email or small mail form and get your questions answered. Wanna know what Yu Suzuki eats for breakfast? Ever wondered why Sonic wears shoes but no pants? Can't quite figure out why we run so many freshkin' pictures of Yui Nats in every issue? Then write to us. We will have the answers. And if we don't, then—well, then we don't. But don't let that stop you. Send it to DCM, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hills Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Call us techno-snobs, but email is absolutely fabulous at dcm@imaginemedia.com

Revealed: The Rock is really Rob Schneider (formerly of SNL) in his skivvies.

# Evolution or Revolution?

## Dreamcast takes two giant leaps into the future

There were a few surprises at Sega's recent Executive Games Summit. But our eyebrows raised the highest when Charles Bellfield, VP of Corporate & Marketing Communications, gestured at a Dreamcast and said, **"Will we ship a box like that in two years? No."**

**Yikes. Is it all over for Dreamcast? Not at all—"The Dreamcast platform remains central to our plans going forward,"** says Bellfield.

Confused? Don't be. Sega is simply announcing the next step in the evolution of its system. "Sega's future is all about delivering content," said Bellfield, which is one of the reasons the company is looking to develop for hand-held platforms (see related story, next page). To enable the company to deliver its games on a whole array of systems, the Dreamcast itself will soon acquire an inexpensive multiplatform architecture.

What does this mean? Three things. First, the Dreamcast architecture will be integrated into a one- or two-chip piece of technology, which can then be licensed and slotted into any number of consumer devices—like DVD players or even PCs.

**Second, the company wants to take its current "free system" business model to the next level.** Right now, you can get a rebate for the cost of the Dreamcast by subscribing to SegaNet for 18 months. In the future, says Bellfield, "You can think of it like a cable box or digital satellite dish. You'll pay to get the content, but you don't pay for the hardware." So Sega will be able to afford to give Dreamcast technology to anyone who wants it, thanks to saving a fortune by reducing the system to a couple of Frito-sized chips.

**Third, and this may be the most exciting part,** "The technology of Dreamcast is designed to scale easily," says Bellfield. Translation? Since the underlying Dreamcast technology—NEC graphics

Senior Sega official Charles Bellfield told ODCM that future iterations of the Dreamcast system will likely be integrated into a one- or two-chip piece of technology, which can be licensed and slotted into any number of consumer devices—such as DVD players.

## THIS MONTH

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# "Sega's future is all about delivering content."

Charles Bellfield

hardware, Hitachi CPU, and RAM—can all be improved upon in future iterations, it will be. And does this mean that a Dreamcast 2 is in the offing? "No," he says. "That implies the old, console way of thinking, and we're simply moving beyond that." Developers will

continue to use the same unique

development environments, APIs, graphics libraries, etc, so there won't be the learning

curve of a new system—they'll just be able to get more out of Dreamcast.

And us gamers will suddenly be playing on a more powerful gaming system.

And will current Dreamcast owners be able to play games written for upgraded, don't-call-it-DC2-hardware? Forward compatibility (playing new games on old systems—as opposed to backwards compatibility, or playing old games on new systems) isn't a reality yet, but it could be within the realm of possibility.

In short, the future for Dreamcast has never looked brighter. If Sega manages to proliferate Dreamcast technology into multiple devices, from DVD players to set-top boxes to who knows, we may see the Dreamcast become the first console to break out of the traditional mode and become its own multiarchitecture gaming platform. And that...well, that would be really cool.

## PARTNER UP

So, just who will Sega partner with to bring the Dreamcast architecture to a wider audience? The company isn't talking, but we can at least tell you who it *isn't* partnering with—Sony, which has its own small game division with a combo gameplayer/DVD player out now; Panasonic, which has made a deal with Nintendo to include GameCube technology in its DVD players; and Toshiba, which is already in bed with Sony thanks to a deal regarding joint manufacture of PS2 chips. Which leaves Thompson/RCA, JVC and Samsung as the biggest brands who could conceivably decide to add gaming to their DVD player offerings.

## Sega teams will develop for multiple platforms... Relax, it's not what you think

IT'S OFFICIAL. SEGA'S TOP DESIGN TEAMS ARE GETTING READY to develop for multiple platforms. But, before you go unplugging your Dreamcast and getting ready to put in the closest, consider this. The multiple platforms don't include any other videogame consoles—Dreamcast is central to Sega's content development. Instead, according to Sega, the company is looking to develop its intellectual property (lawyer talk for its great characters like Sonic, etc.) on handheld platforms.

In other words, Sega games could appear on handheld gaming systems (no one mentioned Game Boy or Game Boy Advance, but frankly, they didn't have to), mobile phones (the company already has a deal with Motorola to deploy games on some of its new phones), and palm-top devices that are now powerful enough to play emulated or native version of Sega's 16bit hits like *Sonic 2* or *Shinobi*.

## Alexander: The Road to Percia

FANS OF STRATEGY ON DREAMCAST SHOULD REJOICE: A PROMISING NEW strat game is heading to DC in Japan...and here's hoping it makes it over! As young Alexander, you'll be expanding your empire towards Percia—and it features several twists on the standard strategy theme. First, deploying the right troops with the right general for each given battlefield situation is crucial to victory. Second, the game features tons of animation and story, and it's managed to create an incredibly cast of characters. You can only control Alexander—other characters are controlled only by their own individual AI—but you can move the camera around during the realtime battles to keep abreast of the situation across the entire battlefield.

Will we be calling this game Alexander be Great? Almost definitely. And will it conquer America? Who knows? Check back for more soon.

So what does this anime girl have to do with Alexander? The game's being developed in Japan, so of course, it's been given a Japanese look by the developer.



# Japanese Envy

Creating a new world from the ground up is easy with **Dream Studio**. As long as you live in Japan.

**QUESTION:** What's Japanese, cooler than anything, and not—repeat not—scheduled for US release anytime soon? **Dream Studio**, Sega's new 3D adventure/RPG maker. The system lets you design characters, create 3D environments, and develop time- and event-based scenarios so you can take a swipe at making the next *Grandia*. Once you're done, you can save your scenarios to VMU or upload them for others to play. So when's this awesome RPG-making tool coming to the US? Not any time soon, unfortunately. Because the system is so text-based, localizing it for US release would be a major undertaking. We're still hopeful, though, that this game genesis tool will ship in the States sometime in the next year. Maybe. We hope.



Dream Studio's text-based interface would be a nightmare to localize for US release.



## SEPARATED AT BIRTH



Resident Evil's Claire That '70s Show's Donna

Chris' private (now public) and unwholesome obsession with the admittedly gorgeous star of *That '70s Show* spurred this month's choice for Separated at Birth. We couldn't help but notice how much Donna looks like Resident Evil's resident babe, Claire Redfield. Here're a few points of similarity:

- They both have red hair.
- They both wear chokers.
- They are both disarmingly sexy.
- They both kill (or drink) zombies.
- They both really like Chris (or at least, they do in Chris's fantasyland—we think).
- Their luscious lips—shaped EXACTLY the same way!—just beg to be kissed.



## DREAM ON

GAMES WE WISH WERE ON DC

**COLUMNS** SEGA 1993  
Okay, Sega, this should be no-brainer! The original Columns is acknowledged to be so good, it's going to be one of the charter titles on the new Smash Pack—but what we want now is a complete update for Dreamcast. An update complete with...dare we say it...INTERNET MULTIPLAYER. If it ain't online, it ain't our bag. Booyah. Note to Sega: Make this happen.



## HOT LIST

WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE ...

**We want it badly:**

- Gully Gear X
- Sonic Adventure
- Shermoo 2
- Outigger
- PSO

**You want it badly:**

- Shermoo 2
- Dragonball Z
- Dragonball Z
- Dragonball Z
- Dragonball Z

**We all hope & pray for:**

- NIGHTS 2
- Soul Calibur 2
- Panzer Dragon Space 2
- Streets of Rage 4
- Herzog Zwei 2

**You're dying to play with:**

- DVD player
- Zip drive
- MP3 "solution"
- Broadband adapter
- Even



## TOP 10

BEST SELLING TITLES, NOV. 2000


1. SEGA SPORTS NBA 2K1	SEGA
2. SHENMUE	SEGA
3. SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K1	SEGA
4. CRAZY TAXI	SEGA
5. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION
6. JET GRIND RADIO	SEGA
7. READY TO RUMBLE: ROUND 2	MIDWAY
8. QUAKE III ARENA	SEGA
9. SONIC ADVENTURE	SEGA
10. SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K	SEGA

## Gaga for Segagaga?

Weirdest. Idea. Ever.

In a bizarre case of art imitating life, Sega Hitmaker (best known for *Virtua Tennis*), is planning to release a management sim for Dreamcast. In this game, titled (we kid you not) *Segagaga*, you'll play the head of Sega as the company attempts to take over the gaming business. Sold online only in Japan, don't expect to see it over here—although if it does make the journey, we expect Peter Moore to do the strategy guide.

A timeless legend. An epic adventure.

 Dreamcast™

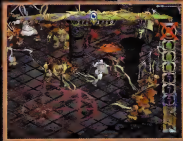
# Record Of LODOSS War

*"Record Of Lodoss War...  
will definitely satisfy  
Dreamcast owning  
Diablo fans"*

www.gamespot.com

*"Record Of Lodoss War...  
looks and sounds  
brilliant on the  
Dreamcast"*

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**CRAVE**  
ENTERTAINMENT

Experience the world of Record of Lodoss War up close and personal in an epic 3D action/RPG only for Sega Dreamcast.  
Take control of a mysterious warrior from the past, resurrected to save the future, on a colossal quest filled with pulse  
pounding action and high adventure. Join forces with popular characters from the Lodoss universe and combat hundreds  
of vicious enemies with dozens of spectacular spells and customizable weapons.



Animated Blood  
Animated Violence

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# Calling All Dreamcasts

DreamCall uses the Seaman microphone to make phone calls over the Internet. A separately packaged mike is in the works.



## DreamCall: Use the Internet to screw the phone company

### Nobody Likes the Phone Companies.

We don't, at any rate. Which is why we're hella excited about DreamCall, a new feature of Browser 2.6 (which comes, by the way, on the GD-ROM included with this issue).

DreamCall enables you to use your Dreamcast's internet connection in combination with the Dreamcast microphone (currently available with Seaman, soon to be available separately) to make free Dreamcast-to-Dreamcast calls anywhere in the world. Got a little friend in Pakistan? Call her for free.

DreamCall also lets you make calls to the outside world (that is, regular people on regular phones) using your Dreamcast. Unfortunately, these conversations will cost you a steep 5¢ a minute—but then, there's no long distance fee, so you still might be saving money.

How's the quality? Not too bad, although there's a slight delay and a tiny bit of distortion. We'd rate the quality much higher than, say, Houston-to-space shuttle communications, but lower than that of regular phone or digital cellular. It's more like analog cellular quality.

Of course, you'll probably have to email your partner to set up a time to call, since your Dreamcast needs to be on, online and running the browser to receive calls—unless your game is programmed to monitor for DreamCall activity, which none are—but what the technology lacks in spontaneity, it more than makes up for in free-ness.

And predictably, the DreamCall technology will be showing up in games soon. *Alien Front Online* (see Coming Soon, pg. 56) will be the first title to use it.

With Sega's new DreamCall software and a DC microphone, you can make long distance calls to other Dreamcasters for free. The software is built into the new Browser 2.6—which just happens to be included on this month's demo disc.



## What's Your Type?

### From horoscopes to horrorscopes

**Why do so many games tell you the blood types of the characters?** It's a Japanese thing: In Japan, people look at blood types the way we look at horoscopes here in the US. According to the Japanese system, your blood type determines your personality.

Here's a handy index to help you understand how blood types are used in games.

**Type A**  
Phuses: Honest, trustworthy, hard-working, loyal, law-abiding

**Minusses:** Flincky, hard to please, sneaky, unstable when drunk

**Type B**  
Phuses: Adventurous, passionate, friendly, independent  
Minusses: Lazy, indiscreet, unpredictable, bossy

**Type AB**  
Phuses: Sensitive, powerful, friendly, well organized  
Minusses: Too proud, a playboy, vain, hard to get to know

**Type O**  
Phuses: Strong, athletic, sexy, forthright, very ambitious

**Minusses:** Insecure, too idealistic, big mouth, jealous

(The most common type in Japan is A. In the US, it's O.)







# Nice Package!

**My god, it's full of Genesis games...**

Starting in January, Sega's going to deliver something that console buyers haven't seen since the 16-bit days: a pack-in game. Well, twelve of them, actually. Sorta.

Here's the deal. Starting in January, there will be a new Dreamcast retail package available, the **Smash Pack Bundle**. Although all of the details aren't fully fleshed out, it looks like it will cost \$169—and it's going to come with one of the most awesome pack-ins ever.

On the Smash Pack disc will be **SegaSwirl**, **Browser 2.6** (also found on this disc, FYI), **Virtua Cop 2** (with light gun support!), and—get this—ten emulated Sega Genesis classics! Sega has been offering pay-to-play emulated Genesis games via its online network in Japan, but these will be complete games on the disc. No word on whether



**GOLDEN AXE**



**SHINOBI**



**PHANTASY STAR 2**

or not we'll be able to get our greedy little hands on the technology so we can slide you a couple of free Genesis games with each issue, but we're working on it.

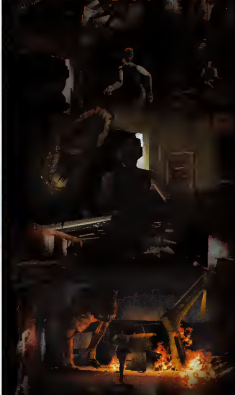
The games included will be **Sonic the Hedgehog**, **Altered Beast**, **Streets of Rage 2**, **Golden Axe**, **Vector Man**, **Revenge of Shinobi**, **Columns**, **Phantasy Star II**, **Shining Force**, and **Wrestle War**. Holy crap! That's a lotta good Genesis games.

Although Sega is being coy about plans for releasing the Smash Pack as a stand-alone disc, we'll eat our spats if the disc, or something very similar, doesn't come along soon after the Smash Pack Bundle is released.



**STREETS OF RAGE II**

# Know Fear...



**CAPCOM**  
capcom.com



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# Shenmue: Woo-hoo!



**Ryo and friends make their official US debut with a huge party—ODCM crashes it**

**TO MARK SHENMUE'S OFFICIAL** release, Sega went straight to the top: Shanghai 1930, San Francisco's swankiest and most exclusive Chinese eatery. Fittingly, this restaurant was also the site where Sega first revealed the existence of Shenmue, way back in 1998.

The international videogame digerati turned out in force for the event, where they were wined, dined and entertained by live jazz and a troupe of traditional Japanese taiko drummers (who were actually playing outside and weren't technically part of the event—but cool nonetheless), and more Sega staffers, local celebs, and game journoes resplendent in logo-ed T's and nappy jeans than you could shake a stick at.

The highlight of the evening was when Shenmue creator/god Yu Suzuki himself picked up the mike and gave a speech, about 'mue's development and his expectations for the game in the US market. (In brief: He hopes we like it.)

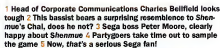
Sega President Peter Moore spoke to the crowd too, about the incredible success of Dreamcast so far and his high hopes for a brilliant future.

With games like Shenmue in hand, trust us: the only worry that Sega should have is making sure it has enough inventory in stock to keep up with the demand!



**The highlight of the evening was when creator/god Yu Suzuki himself took the mike**





ARCADE ACTION

# Quarter Pounders

... and no cheese  
at Sega's private  
arcade show

**SEGA SHOWED OFF ITS LATEST** goodies at a recent private arcade show in Tokyo, and we (or at least our correspondents) were there. Most impressive game? Probably *Air Trix*, Sega's next-generation arcade skater. Using a hardware setup like *Top Skater*, it adds serious vert skills and a lot more tricks for an incredible punch. Coming home? Maybe. Maybe.

Definitely coming home? The rad-looking *Samba De Amigo 2000*. It sports our favorite 2D/3D monkey along with tons and tons of new songs, which feature a Caribbean flavor this time. So far, there's no word on US songs this time around, but we're hoping against hope that "Who Let the Dogs Out" will not be among them.

Bottom line? Sega's still got it, and it looks like it may come home...

*Samba 2000* features much more difficult action, including all sorts of new moves and poses guaranteed to embarrass you to death in the arcade, at home, or even all by yourself, just thinking about them. In short, the world's best party game is about to go totally off the hook.

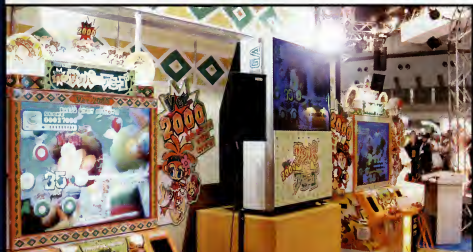


Okay, so first check out the graphics, and then bow before the might of Sega's arcade game designers. *Air Trix* looks like it is going to totally change the world. The only question: will its deluxe hardware control scheme (an actual skate board) allow the play to translate to the home, or will this be an arcade experience only? Time will tell.

## Hockey on Dreamcast?

Believe it, baby. Maybe...

It's not on Dreamcast yet, but *Sports Jam* will be headed there soon if there's any justice in the world. Sega's latest arcade classic features arcade takes on eight different sports (including hockey, soccer, golf, football, basketball, biking, basketball and tennis) on over twelve stages. The game uses a simple two-button control scheme, and is designed to test your accuracy at every sport. A two-player mode is included (of course), and since the game comes on a GD-ROM—even in the arcade—we're hoping it will be an easy port to Dreamcast. We'll have more on this promising arcade romp as soon as we can pry more info out of Sega.







# What Grandia (ia) Voice Acting!

## ODCM gets the skinny on good vocals

**One of the best things about Grandia II is the fantastic voice acting.** How'd Ubisoft do it, when the standard of voice-overs rarely has risen much beyond the laughable "Aiy, you are the master of unlocking." School last by Capcom in the original Resident Evil? Hiring a professional director helps. **ODCM** took the old Corporate Jet (well, technically, it was Ubisoft's corporate jet) to LA to get the goods from Grandia II's voice director, Kris Zimmerman—who's probably best known for her work on Metal Gear Solid.

### ODCM: What's the main role of a voice director?

Kris Zimmerman: I get performances out of the actors once they're hired. And I help cast and choose actors for the game. With that comes what some people would call producing: coordinating, setting up, budgets, etc. But I don't call myself a voice producer by trade, I prefer to refer to my work as voice direction.

### You've worked in a lot of fields; which do you prefer? Cartoons? Games? TV? Why?

It's all very similar, actually. My skill is the same regardless of the project. Games tend to get done quicker as they're more concise. This allows us to focus on what we're doing and to become completely absorbed in the story while we're working on the project. Cartoons tend to be strung out over months. For Grandia II, we did eight sessions, which would have taken eight to sixteen weeks in cartoonland. Games are more intense... in a good way.

### What were some of your impressions of videogames when you first began doing work on them, versus how you view videogames now?

Games are so much better now. Story content has gotten much better. It's much more story-oriented now. There aren't as many arbitrary choices. It used to be you had to say something fifteen times depending on what the player did in the game. Now you still have as many avenues through the games, but the ways you can get through them are much more interesting, and not as repetitive. [Games are] much more complex now. The largest game

I've ever done was Metal Gear Solid. When I got the script, I thought it was one giant pile to hand out to all the actors. But then I realized that the 900+ pages before me was just my copy. With Grandia II, the path through it is so interesting. I really liked the story. What's funny is that I have a 12-year-old son and he couldn't care less about the cartoons I've done. The minute his friends realized I worked on these games, I became his hero.

### What videogame voice-over direction have you previously been involved in?

Metal Gear Solid, Star Trek Voyager, Elite Force, Deep Space 9: The Fallen, Tenchu 2, Alundra, The Sydney Olympics, Revanant, Heretic II and Zork: Grand Inquisitor.

### The RPG fanbase is one of the pickiest subsets of video game fandom. Have you found this worrisome? Did it affect decisions you made about Grandia II?

No. I know that I'm giving them the best people available for the role. At that point, the story and the timeframe for recording was adequate, so we were going to get a good game. And we had that with Grandia II.

### RPG localizations suffer from time and budget constraints. Have you run into any problems?

Sound localization is an expensive thing. The studio is very expensive. The actors are expensive. And the actors only work a set number of hours per payment. Without knowing the client [Ubisoft] going in, you never know how much they participate or how clear they're going to be once we start. The difficult thing is trying to figure out how to budget the actor's time. They had an aggressive schedule, but we met it. They had the editors working immediately on the raw cuts. It was a massive team effort.

### What's your opinion on voice acting in videogames?

It's gotten so much better. I know that when my son started playing games, I was appalled at how bad it was. It was like they were casting family members to do roles. I think companies like Ubisoft are starting to listen to the fans and beginning to investigate how to do it right. And not only to investigate, but to succeed.

# It's In Your Blood...



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# FORBIDDE GAMES of



**ODCM UNCOVERS THE SHOCKING TRUTH: YOU**

# N JAPAN

**W**arning: There are certain games us Western gamers were never meant to see. Games so Japanese that they violate all import requirements for cuteness and weirdness. Games based on concepts so foreign to traditional US gamers' tastes that for even suggesting that a company publish one over here, your average product acquisition guy would probably be given three months sick leave (or be quietly asked to clean out his desk). ¶ But Japanese gamers aren't insane. They just enjoy some genres that you probably never even knew existed. But what do you expect from a country where people play golf on top of skyscrapers, go angling in glorified swimming pools, and where the number one best-selling Dreamcast title—ever—is *Seaman*: a game in which you interact with a moody fish who's even better than your therapist at telling you why you suck. ¶ Over the next four pages, we'll take you through the best examples of a whole new gaming world...which you'll probably never see anywhere else. Will any of these games ever come to the US? Probably not. Should they? A tough call. We don't like being denied any choices, and if Infogrames will bring out *Pen Pen*, surely someone would be willing to release *Tokyo Bus Guide*. Anyway, without further ado, get ready to take a look at exactly what you've been missing...

**AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PLAY THESE DREAMCAST TITLES!**

## CASE STUDY #1

# DATING

Simply-animated dating interaction games have been popular in Japan since the days of the SNES console. They mostly revolve around a male hero (i.e., you) trying to win the affections of a certain girl, or, if you're lucky, a series of girls.

The courting procedure is usually undertaken by selecting options from various menus and watching the results play through onscreen. For example, in *Memories Off*, there's a point where you spot your 'love interest' a few cars away on the train. You're provided with two options: should you shout at her, or go and sit next to her? Of course, you don't need us to tell you that the latter would be the more charming maneuver. It doesn't sound very thrilling, does it? But in a reserved and conservative society, this sort of game provides light-hearted 'practice' in charming the opposite sex for adolescent would-be romancers. Plus, they're usually very funny, working like interactive versions of more light-hearted anime.



**MEMORIES OFF** Lots of girls wearing sailor suits. What more can you say, really?



## TOKIMEMI MEMORIAL

*Tokimemi Memorial* takes a slightly different approach to the dating genre, but it still manages to capture the same appealing elements. After getting into the exclusive Kirameki High School, you meet a friend from your childhood named Fujisaki Shiori. She is in the same class as you are, and during your three years at the school, you strive to impress her—and ultimately, to win her love. To do this, you must excel in academic areas and in sporting prowess...which means that you'll have to go a lot further than simply flirting a bit and making an awkward pass at the school dance.



**White Illumination** Date girls in the upper-crust sections of Japanese cities...if that sort of thing is your bag.



あつ もう大丈夫！  
おはつ ちよつとの顔だけだつたね。

**Photo Memories** Yet another inscrutable title hides yet another standard date 'em up.

In a reserved and conservative society, this sort of game provides light-hearted 'practice' in charming the opposite sex for adolescent would-be romancers.



## TOKYO BUS GUIDE



As a bus driver in—you guessed it—Tokyo, it's your goal in life to be the best damn bus driver ever to grace the streets of Japan. To achieve this title, you'll have to be pointlessly rude to customers and occasionally hit the pavement, sending old women collapsing into the aisles... no, that would San Francisco Bus Guide. Instead, you must drive under the speed limit, indicate before turning, and be polite. The result is amazingly addictive and very underrated in terms of complexity and interaction. Japanese gamers were so thrilled with the game that Sega has actually taken up the cause, and is in the process of converting Tokyo Bus Guide into a full-fledged arcade title replete with driver's seat.

### CASE STUDY #2

## WORK



Japan is a nation seemingly obsessed with work. Well, that's not exactly true—they just do a lot of it. All the time. Absenteeism is unheard of, overtime is mandatory (office employees sometimes sleep at their desks after working until 6am), and people have even been known to work themselves to death.

Maybe that's why games that simulate employment are so immensely popular there. And we don't mean loony knock-offs like *Crazy Taxi*; we mean accurate simulations. The smash hit arcade and console title *Densha De Go!* for example, enables players to drive a commuter train around Japan. Even *Shenmue* provides a little work-related fun, enabling you to stack crates in a warehouse.

Although they sound ridiculous, these work sims are surprisingly therapeutic, enabling you to indulge in careers you'd never usually dream of. Just don't expect to be paid for playing.



### Winning Post

Spend a day at the races in true Marx Brothers fashion. Train your own Derby horse and prep it for some serious racing action. You'll win money and kudos if you manage to get the formula right.



### Densha De Go! 2

Chugging over Japan in trains has never been so much fun. The original in the arcade was so successful that the *Densha* series has spread to piloting planes.

### Let's Make a Soccer Team

All budding chairmen can hone their skills in the J-League. You'll be responsible for staffing your office by choosing everything from a secretary to the color of your team's jerseys in order to build the perfect group of soccer players and take the cup.

## LET'S MAKE A PRO BASEBALL TEAM



*Let's Make a Pro Baseball Team* goes pretty far into the nether regions of an often mysterious world. You're able to hire and fire everyone from secretaries to players to executives; you're also in charge of overseeing the team, tending to the club's finances, choosing the equipment—you can even get involved in stadium acquisition and development. Everything, basically. But to keep it out of the PC-dullard stat-based realm, Sega decided that a "massive-head" mode was essential for the players, as were over the top bright and cute graphics.



## DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

This home version of the arcade favorite (which East-born experts use merely to practise on for their proper arcade showdowns) comes with its own dancing controller—a floor mat with four arrows on it.

Gameplay is simple: Just choose a tune, and then, as arrow symbols appear onscreen, step on the corresponding arrows on the mat to make your onscreen character dance like a bubblegum-pop star. The more precise you are with your groove, the more points you get. As a bonus, you'll shed a few pounds.

### Super Producers

In this music/work hybrid that enables you to manage a J-Pop star, you'll be able to audition potential singing starlets from a group—and then managing her whole career is up to you from there on out. Will she be a hyper hip-hop cutie or a traditional pop superstar? You choose her music, her look and her video work. Do it right and you'll land on the music charts.



### Puyo Puyo Da!

Dance with the Puyo Puyo crew! In this Bust-A-Groove for the puzzle fan set, you'll use classic combos to bury your light-footed opponents.



### Sonic Team PowerPlay

It's not really a game, it's Sonic Team's best audio achievements. Yes, you heard



### Real Sound 2

A game with no visuals soothes your soul; it's an especially great game if you happen to be blind. We hear.

right. It's more of a soundtrack than a real game, which roughly translates into 'you're lucky if the import store even carries this.'

### CASE STUDY #4

# MUSIC

Since Konami's DJ-ing sim *BeatMania* hit Japanese arcades, rhythm-action games have exploded in popularity—and the craze shows no sign of abating. The genre is probably popular for the same reason karaoke is so huge in Japan. It gives usually-restrained office workers the chance to show off in front of their friends in a semi-controlled environment. (It's also, we can attest after having spent some time in dancing arcades in Shinjuku, a great way to break the ice with the ladies.) Of all the crazy Japanese genres we've covered so far, this is probably the most accessible to US gamers, with titles like *PaRappa the Rappa* and *Dance Dance* doing reasonably well on PlayStation, and *Samba De Amigo* drawing a good amount of attention on DC. In this section, you'll find examples of several more musical oddities which might just tickle your aural fancy. Will they ever come to the US? Well, never underestimate music to bring gaming nations together.

## POP'N MUSIC

*Pop'n Music* is as simple as your average pop star, but more fraught with tension than the ODCM office at deadline (and that's pretty damn tense). All that is required is that you tap the appropriate button at the same time that it's indicated on the screen.

Fronted by super-furry animals, *Pop'n Music* is a top package, especially with the optional controller, which is a trapezium-shaped block full of buttons. The frenetic button pushing may wear a little thin, but its fast-paced fun is unbeatable. As with *Dance Dance Revolution*, this is a party game by definition, and a splendid one at that. It's just too J-Pop-oriented and downright strange to ever see a release in the West, though, which is unfortunate.

## CASE STUDY #4

# MANGA

It would take a whole book to explain the possible origins of manga and the many definitions you could put to the term. However the modern use of 'manga' as a catch-all name for Japanese comics has been around since the 1960s, when legendary artist Osamu Tezuka created *Astro Boy*—the story of a cute android crime fighter and his mad professor inventor.

Since then, manga and its animated equivalent, anime, have grown into national obsessions—with books, animated series' and animated films aimed at everyone from schoolboys to housewives. Shoji Kawamori's popular *Macross* was one of the first major manga titles to become a game, released on Nintendo's Famicom (known as the NES in the US) in the 1980s. From then on, many generations have seen manga and anime franchises achieve international success.

Dreamcast examples include *Gundam*, *Kikaide* (*Tech Romancer* in the US), *Bangaiin*, *Record of Lodoss War* and *Sakura Taisen*. Most include lengthy anime cutscenes, which is cool if you enjoy Japanese animation.



### Nadesico the Mission

An attractive outerspace strategy game based on the popular anime, for people who consider themselves to be savvy armchair generals of some sort or another.



### Aa! Megamisama Quiz

Quiz-tastic arcade-to-PC port featuring the lovely leading ladies of the cult favorite anime and manga series *Aa! Megamisama* (*Ah! My Goddess* in the US).

The game is a mixture of CG and animated events influenced by how you answers various series of questions asked by Beldandy and Co. The big draw for fans will be the inclusion of all-new characters not found in either the anime or the manga. This is definitely an otaku-only sort of event.



### Langrisser Millennium

Though technically not spawned from a manga or anime, the *Langrisser* series is beloved amongst the audience for both mediums mainly due to the series' strong storyline and character designs by renowned manga artist Satoshi Urushihara (*Chiraty*, etc...), with the exception of *Millennium*.

All five installments in the series have been strategy RPGs with a concentration on massive battles similar to the *Shining Force* series, but with even more depth and skill required.



## SAKURA TAISEN

The *Sakura* series is one of the most precious and well-respected brands Sega has in Japan, and *Sakura Taisen 1 & 2* are the remakes of Saturn classics. In typical manga style, you join a secret organisation fighting against *All Evil* (hmmm, quite an ambitious remit). There are tactical battles aplenty, but these are some of the oddest you'll ever fight.


You command the Hanagumi Clan of female warriors in mech suits, and the way in which you interact with them determines the success of your campaign. Points are given for saying the right things at the right time—i.e., encouraging them during battle instead of hitting on them. The manga theme is handled by Fujishima Kosuke, who has also worked on the excellent *Ah! My Goddess* manga series. It may prove impenetrable to most Westerners, though.

Manga and anime are national obsessions: with books, animated series and films aimed at everyone from schoolboys to housewives.

# Leave your enemies shaken AND stirred



## COVERT MISSIONS

 Dreamcast™

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All screen shots are from the Sega Dreamcast game console.





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FROM  
GEEK  
TO  
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*Jet Grind Radio's lovely graf punk hits the target: geeks dig chicks and games.*

ODCM  
investigates  
how videogames  
courted the  
underground,  
hijacked the  
mainstream  
and never  
looked back.

Dark bedrooms. Sweaty control pads. Unwashed sweatpants. We could go on and on about videogaming's sordid past, but it's a story that already been well-documented (and—erm—Chris would rather not reprise his misspent youth). These days our favorite pastime suffers no such hang-ups, having undergone a gargantuan transformation from nerdy, reclusive hobby into billion-dollar, Hollywood-dwarfing entertainment behemoth.

How did it all happen? Was it back in 1992 when a million copies of Sonic hit stores nationwide on 'Sonic Tuesday'? Or was it when the British too-hip-to-see-over-its-own-pelvis lifestyle/culture mag *The Face* slapped Lara Croft on its cover? It's almost hard to believe today, when PlayStation2 shortages make the national news and Dreamcast is *Time Magazine's* Product of the Year, how recently the game industry was treated like the forgotten stepchild of entertainment media.

But what price do we pay for acceptance? Is the culture we grew up with selling out? Are games that've been designed for the mainstream—rather than geeks—even worth playing? Well, the answers are a bit more complicated than the questions. Fact: Videogames are no longer the exclusive province of those of us with Palm Pilots on our belts and Mountain Dew on our sweatpants. Fact: Far from merely borrowing from pop culture, games are now starting to dictate it. And which company is leading the way? Fact: Sega. This company's Japanese developers seem to have more style in their VMU games than some other consoles have in their entire libraries. So join us as we have dragged videogaming from the bedroom-dwelling squalor, so well-documented in '80s and '90s media, into the sophisticated splendour of 21st century Dreamcast living.

SCORE 0  
TIME 0:04  
RINGS 0

Once upon a time, this screen was state-of-the-art; and it quickly became art-of-the-state-of videogames, too. Who didn't love Sonic?



SONIC  
× 2

## SUPER SONIC

**It all started with a little blue hedgehog.** Sonic was such a revolutionary character that it's actually quite difficult, ten years after his debut, to understand just how much impact this squat, spiky guy had on the whole industry from the moment he spindashed onto the screen. Before Sonic, the only real, recognizable videogame character around was Mario. And Mario, though we love him dearly, was (and is) about as far from hip as...well...Mario. Mario is safe. Mario teaches typing. Mario has spent his entire career trying to rescue a princess.

Sonic, on the other hand, had a 'tude. At a time in history when game characters were typically nothing more than tiny spaceships, Sonic was a pissed-off little ruffian with a bone to pick. And while, after a decade, this whole 'attitude' bit has become more than a bit trite (read: Poochie et al.), the first time Sonic tapped his foot and glared down his nose at you when you were playing, or teetered dangerously at the edge of a platform, the world of games—and everything that they could become—was fundamentally changed. Sonic may have been the first game character that the average guy wouldn't have been embarrassed to introduce to his girlfriend.

Combined with an innovative ad campaign—you know, the one with the original Sega Scream—portraying games (for the first time) as things that weren't toys, the antics of Sonic the Hedgehog gave gaming its first taste of mainstream cool.

Of course, the millions of copycat characters and ad campaigns—not to mention Sega's ill-advised attempts to make Sonic a family-friendly character—kept things from hitting a critical mass, but the seed was sown.

Sonic the Hedgehog...the face that launched an empire, as well as a whole new epoch in the history of videogames. Without him, we literally wouldn't be here.





# MAKE AN ASS OF YOURSELF

Cool is one thing, but mainstream success is another. In the late '90s, when Japanese coin-op companies realized their profits were tumbling because of fierce competition from home consoles, drastic measures were called for. Enter a wealth of titles that capitalized on the success of simple gameplay (Simon, essentially), backed by awesome style and graphics and aimed squarely at casual gamers.

Here's where we see that despite our fears, casual games really can be for everyone—including hardcore gamers. Although anyone can play them, there's something about funky disco games like *Bust a Groove*, DJ-mixing games like *Beatmania* and the king of dance 'em ups, *Dance Dance Revolution* that makes mixing with the hoi polloi kind of fun. Ever played *Guitar Freaks* or *Samba de Amigo*? These games forever put to rest the notion that gaming is a solitary experience. Witness the crowds in the average arcade around these games, and ponder the potential of social gaming as a concept in its own right.



Evan gets into the Samba spirit. Sega should be screaming.



In *Shenmue*, we may have found the world we want to live in: forever. All that's missing is a couple of Jedi.

## REALITY BYTES

"But it looks like crap!" Such was the typical response when non-gamers were confronted by the efforts of coin-op companies in the late '80s to bring in more casual gamers via realistic, 3D polygons. *Hard Drivin'* might have been a bold attempt to create a more realistic racing experience (and in terms of handling it was), but 3D graphics technology was so primitive back then, next to *Out Run* it looked—well—like crap. Despite the major attention paid to games like *Pac-Man* and *Defender* when they were new, it took loads of imagination and an appetite for abstract representations to look at the early arcade games as anything more than just a fad.

It wasn't really until *Daytona USA* and *Ridge Racer* introduced detailed texture-mapped polygon worlds into arcades that graphical realism became a major way of drawing in more non-gamers. Better graphics were a bridge to the real world—a conscious detachment from the trappings of fantasy and kiddie graphics and another reason not to feel embarrassed playing a game.

It's therefore little coincidence that as soon as videogame graphics (and sound) became sufficiently interesting to a mainstream audience, console gaming took off big-time with sports titles carrying the gauntlet well into casual gamesplaying territory (Incidentally, it doesn't take a genius to work out that the closer to real life graphics become, the bigger the potential audience. However, the irony then will be that no one will want to dwell in worlds that look like our own. Until then, we've got *Shenmue*).

## TICKET TO TOKYO

But licenses can only take you so far. The really cool stuff—the stuff that affects pop culture—is almost always original. And it seems as if virtually all of the coolest games come from Tokyo: from Shibuya in Tokyo, to be precise. Shibuya is the epicenter of the Japanese youth culture universe: this is where trends start, evolve and die. It's also the fashionable home of a select few Sega developers, where the teams are young and the laid-back working environment is in direct contrast to the stifling corporate blandness of the Sega of old. United Game Artists (formerly R&D department 9), creators of the retro-chic rhythm action of *Space Channel 5*, is typical of the new face of Tokyo game design, with offices tucked away down an interesting alleyway not far from the famous Shibuya Square—where giant TV screens adorn the sides of skyscrapers and where SC5 itself was debuted to the Tokyo public late last year. With just a poky security-pad-operated elevator providing access to its development facilities, only the coming and going of its unmistakably hip staff gives a clue to what lies inside.

Camped out here, in the midst of all of the quirky sophistication and freshness that's intrinsic to this progressive, digital design culture, the designers of *Jet Grind Radio* eat can hardly help but create the coolest titles in the world.



Booyah, Shibuya! Sega's big releases stop traffic in Tokyo—and the crowds go wild.

Rave on! Over the last several years, the Chemical Brothers have stepped off of trendy dance floors and into the soundtracks of some of gaming's most popular titles.



## BOMB THE BASS

Back in the 80s—despite the fact that computer games had the sonic sophistication of a hundred angry wasps trapped inside a fupperware container—computer musicians achieved cult status in the 8bit underground, crafting memorable tunes from a few lines of computer code. However, the party really didn't get started until Wipeout's producers convinced big names from the techno scene such as Orbital, Leftfield and the Chemical Brothers to supply tracks for Psygnosis' 32-bit racer. By the time the sequel came along, the dance community was falling over itself to get its hands on the soundtrack.

Once CD-ROM based consoles found their feet in the mid-'90s, gamers' expectations for full orchestral soundtracks and licensed music grew rapidly. Road Rash, Fighters Megamix and Sonic R were the 32bit precursors to DC titles that have boasted licensed music—like Crazy Taxi, Jet Grind Radio and Ferrari 355. And it isn't just electronic musicians who've gotten in on the act: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater has brought pop, punk and hip-hop bands into the act, including the likes of Rage Against the Machine, Public Enemy and the Dead Kennedys.

She's too sexy for almost everything... Ullala took videogames to the very forefront of modern culture, with up-to-the-minute, club-inspired moves and gear.



Music sets the mood for soaring in Pro Skater.

## BY DESIGN

The Designers Republic needs little introduction for anyone who has followed the Wipeout series on PlayStation. Still one of the most inventive graphic design houses around, this small staff/big ideas graphic design outfit based in Sheffield, England provided Psygnosis' futuristic racer with a truly distinctive identity. Stylish, understated graphics transplanted directly from the leading edge of the underground electronic music scene brought major kudos to the title—making a great game nothing short of spectacular.

Turning what could have been an isolated occurrence into a successful trend, PaRappa the Rapper, SCS and puzzle games like Chu Chu Rocket have used fashionable retro styling to communicate with a whole new set of style-conscious gamers.

# LICENSED TO THRILL

Licensing doesn't stop at music, either. By far the easiest way to extend the appeal of videogames beyond dedicated gamers is to hand over a fat wedge of cash in return for a license to a proven intellectual property. But till the mid-'90s, if a game had a license, it was crap. So the end result is that licensees, which should have helped get tons of new blood into games—and reveal the inherent coolness of gaming to the world—actually had the exact opposite effect (Example: Casual gamer buys licensed game. Game sucks. Casual gamer assumes that all games suck and that gamers are hopeless losers.)

These days, videogame licensing is a far more serious business. For a start, movie companies are naturally not so interested in seeing their franchises developed by losers; they go to the experts. So we have Sega entrusted to produce stunning Star Wars coin-ops such as the Naomi-powered *Episode 1 Racer*. And we have Italian car manufacturers working closely with designers to produce authentic simulations such as *Ferrari 355*.

Where licensing has really taken off, though, is in the area of licensed sports personalities and official sporting bodies for home console games, like *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. It's a pattern that follows in the footsteps of FIFA, NFLPA, and countless other brands that game companies have turned into lucrative franchises. One thing's for sure—we've come a long way from the days when licensed meant worthless.



You don't need a driver's license to play this game: But the game needs a license to drive it.

Text art: *Jet Grind Radio* is accused of "legitimizing" graffiti. It sneaks it into the forum of modern art—and modern conflict.



## X GAMES

Smilebit's *Jet Grind Radio* is the latest example of videogames not just aping pop culture with 'rad-hot' characters endowed with attitude (although there's still plenty of that to go around), but actually breaking new ground in terms of style. A stylish synthesis of hip Tokyo street culture, inline skating, graffiti warfare and free-roaming gameplay, *JGR* is to urban skate culture what *Wipeout* was to futuristic racing five years ago. Throw in a pirate radio soundtrack of hip-hop and mashed-up beats and you have the coolest game on the planet, period.

Producer Kawagoe Takayuki offered **ODCM** some insight into why the game ended up being so damn funky: "The team is very young, an average of 26 to 27 years old, which is unique inside Sega. We started with just three people, then added three more for a total of six. Everyone brought new concepts and a brand new vision of videogames, and we were told by Sega to do whatever we wanted to do. So we did." Game designers should take note that this sort of small, tightly-knit group gives the development team a personal investment in the game and, accordingly, endows the game with the sort of close personal attention it needs. By contrast, big committees are fatal cul de sacs for innovation.

As in the media worlds of film and music, there's room for both small-time, underground games and those that effectively break through to a mass audience. For every *Clayton* there is a *Tec-Ten* and *Earl*, for every *Matrix* there is a *Jet Grind Radio*. For every *Crimpsnare* there is an *MDK2*, and for every *Against the Machine* there is a *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. As long as the hardcore audience exists, top developers will cater to them—producing beautiful, deep and original games.

The truth is that videogames are still in their formative stages. Nothing can replace talent, and gaming's future depends almost entirely upon a continual influx of new minds and original thinkers into the development community. Stories need to be told, interactions need to be streamlined and paradigms need to be exploded. The future of videogames is very much in your hands, fellow gamers: For if anyone can understand what still needs to be done, it is you: the readers of **ODCM**. Make your mark.

# TWINKLE, TWINKLE,





# LITTLE STAR

COVER STORY:  
**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE**  
**FIRST LOOK**

TEXT: **FRANCESCA REYES**

## SEGA'S FLAGSHIP RPG SERIES CRUISES INTO THE NEW AGE OF GAMING: ONLINE

At the dawn of 2001, console gaming takes the next step in its evolutionary process, with the debut of *Phantasy Star Online*, the first US console RPG to go global over the Net. It isn't the Massively Multiplayer RPG that some DC owners were hoping for, but backed by servers that can support up to a thousand simultaneous users, *PSO* is definitely a step in the right direction.

After a year of hoarding tiny kernels of info, **ODCM** has finally been invited to partake of the whole feast: and man, is it a tasty one.

Some might call the pairing of *Phantasy Star* and *Sonic Team* an odd choice, but if you're up on your history of the series it's easy to see the connection. Yūji Naka and some of the various members of *Sonic Team* have been with *PS* since the beginning, with Naka claiming lead programming credits on both *Phantasy Star I* and *II* (interestingly, hardcore gamers have always held that the original title is the best in the series on the basis of its groundbreaking size, scope and gameplay—not to mention its ingenious storyline). Precedents initially set by *Sonic Team* have been carried through the run of the series, on both the Sega Master System and Genesis. So really, the Team was the logical choice for captaining *Phantasy Star's* next big trip into innovation—online.

An early version of *PSO* has finally hit the **ODCM** offices—not yet in reviewable shape, but good enough to go the distance. So grab a bag of holding...we're giving it.

Phantasy Star Online Illustration: Sonic Team





Has Sonic ever beat his creator of a game of PSO? Naka's smart, but Sonic's so dang fast...

ODCM's crack Japanese correspondent Christophe Kagotani managed to catch up with Sonic Team CEO Yuji Naka, when he could take time out from race car driving (we hear Naka recently traded in his Sonic-blue Porsche for a super swank Lotus Elize, which he races at the track while the bigwigs at Sega Japan cross their fingers nervously and hope he finds a safer hobby soon; maybe they should just remind him of what happened to Mark Hamill when he started racing between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*). Naka gave Christophe the scoop: check it out.

Q What were you trying to achieve with this game? Did you achieve it?  
A It should have been released in March 2000, but I wanted to add a few features that I thought were important. As the volume increased, the team needed more time. This isn't a standard RPG, where you have to avoid boring players with a game world that's too large. PSO is about online communication. I wanted this to be the heart of the project, and it took time. I think we achieved what we set out to do.

Q PSO is the first RPG to break "language barriers." Will you break the "console barrier" in the near future?  
A It's difficult to predict whether the translator can be ported to any other systems. PSO in its actual shape would never run on any other hardware, even on the PC. We are playing constantly with the V Sync (chip)...so it may never work on PCs. And if you're talking about the newest consoles, like Sony's PS2, it will never run: no chance. Maybe on an Xbox or Game Cube. Maybe.

Considering how hard it has been to break the language barrier, only one platform could do it: Dreamcast. Breaking through the hardware wall may represent a marketing advantage, but I don't see any merit in that. When you develop a game for different platforms, you must base your work around the system that is the weakest or least evolved. So if you wanted to make the game run on both Dreamcast and the PS2, you could never get the same result for either. The project would then become a very cheap-looking game. >>

When you start a new game, it's up to you to choose which of the nine different variable characters you'll use for the duration of your journey in PSO.

#### CHARACTER SELECT



The information hub is where you'll gather all the know-how you'll need in order to move ahead on your adventure. Oh, and the gals there wear some spiffy duds.

## “Once you’ve taken the job and in for a few nasty surprises—

### Building a Better Android

One of the most clever features in *Phantasy Star Online* is the option for players to create their own characters through an Edit mode. While you're not able to build one from scratch, you can choose between nine available characters representing three distinct categories: Hunter, Ranger and Force.

Hymar, Hucast and Hanyuru are the Hunters, experts in the art of close combat and swordplay. Raycast, Raymar and Raykashiru are the Rangers, using many weapons proficiently but specializing in long-range attacks. Finally, Formaru, Fonyuru and Fonyume are the Force characters, masters of spell-casting and other wispy-wafy activities. Physically, they're the weakest, but they can perform long-range attacks with a variety of spells (of course, we should note that all of these names may change for the US version).

And don't forget that in addition to these three different classes, you must

also figure in PSO's three different character races: Human, Newman and Android (some characters incorporate hybrid features). From that point, you're then able to customize all sorts of cool things about your character, from its proportions to its "color" and style (it's all about coordinating, girlfriend). Some characters have more tweakable features than others, but all in all, this game makes it uniquely possible to create a totally original fighter.

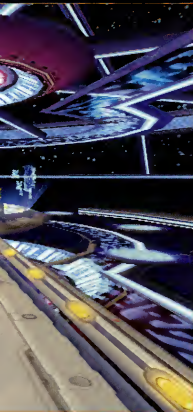
### Meseta makes the world go round

When you're all set, you'll begin your journey in a self-contained space station floating through the Algol Solar System. You're a member of Pioneer 2, a team of interstellar refugees on its way to colonize a new planet. The group is traveling in the wake of an earlier team, called Pioneer 1, which had been sent years ago to terraform the land—but which went suddenly off

the radar (literally) just before Pioneer 2 is about to land. More on that later.

While on the station, you'll discover merchant shops, information hubs and transporters which can take you down to the new planet's surface. And in order to beef up your character's arsenal, you'll need the right amount of the PS-standard "meseta" (money) in order to purchase any goods. So first, you'll need to ask for advice and help at the info desk below the main deck.

Once you've spoken to the head of operations at the information desk, you'll receive all the necessary goodies (like a field map) and get access to the main transporter in the city square. According to the man behind the desk, you're one of a few select people who possess both the skills and qualifications necessary for joining the research team. What does the research team get to do? Well, it explores the planet's surface far below—focusing on the environs of a gigantic explosion that (it



Everything in *Phantasy Star Online* is rendered in lovely, textured polygons. From the townspeople to the creatures that inhabit the various dungeons, every denizen of this world is equipped with great realtime animations and wicked special effects. No one does colors like *Sonic Team*: You really feel like you're in another world.



Welcome to the 'new' era of gaming, in which you get to blow stuff up—mainly large crates.

## landed on the planet, you're and waves of freaky monsters."

turns out) was what wiped out all communications with Pioneer 1. Lucky you.

Once you've taken the job and landed on the planet, you're in for a few nasty surprises—and waves of freaky monsters. Your task is to defeat them, while collecting as much meseta as your handbag can carry.

### Field Work

Three distinct areas are accessible right now, each containing different types of creatures with unique attributes. The Lava Zone is a fiery cave buried deep within the planet, whose inhabitants are immune to the effects of heat. The Deepest Cavern Zone is full of dangerous creatures, maze-like pathways, puzzles and traps. And the River Mouth Zone is a huge open area riddled with poisonous plants and hatches that open into hidden areas.

There are 50 or so different quests, ranging from battling huge bosses to finding magical items or using team-

work to move obstacles that block entrances to new areas. Dungeons are commonplace, and generated randomly by the game. This means that monsters, items, doors and the path you need to follow will differ every time you play. And *Sonic Team* CEO Yuji Naka has stated that once the initial quests have been completed, the team may be adding even more. In order to make this world a constantly evolving place where there's always something new to do.

While this option is still up in the air, we're quite content to hack our way through monsters while deciphering the mystery behind Pioneer 1's disappearance. Randomly placed ground pods, called "cets," contain bits of story as told by its long-gone team members, and events will help to guide you through the game's loose plot. But don't depend on the storyline to keep you enthralled throughout the length of *PSO*...It is, ultimately, a game

of action and online teamwork. In fact, it's more like the early computer RPGs of *Wizardry*'s ilk than it is like *Final Fantasy*; but the core role-playing elements remain strong.

### Brave New Word

As the title suggests, *PSO* is meant to be played over the Net. When you begin a game, you can choose to play either offline or online. If you choose the latter, you'll be automatically transported to the massive mothership where you'll enter one of ten different sections. Each section branches off into yet another ten lobbies, and in each of these lobbies, you'll meet up with other players and marvel at each other's wonderfully customized avatars. Think of it as a glorified chat room with a purpose (usually).

This might not sound so exciting, but it's a whole different experience when you do it for the first time in person. Imagine communicating with >>

Q As an online RPG, there is an odd structure to *PSO*—lots of levels rather than a coherent world. Why?

A You know, the story is not that expansive. There is one dungeon (split into various subsections), and you're able to explore and enjoy it with other players. There's a central plot, but this isn't a standard RPG and shouldn't be compared in a standard way.

Q Did you consider other methods for communication and translation, besides the branch translation system that is currently used? Why did you finally opt for this system?

A I've been thinking of creating this type of communication system for more than five years now; I really wanted to design a system allowing people from all over the world to communicate together. But there were many elements I did not know how to handle—I spent much time on paper trying to find a way.

I started with words. We are still working on the word select system: Japanese and English are quite easy, since there is only a problem of word location in the sentence, but in Spanish or French, there are male or female words with so many rules that it's been a nightmare. Last month, we had to redesign the entire system!

This "universal" translator is a first for the entire game industry, which has been a real challenge. The word select system has 2000 words so far, but I realize that players would like to use more words than this to express their feelings, and it's been incredibly difficult to satisfy everyone. I'm planning that in ten years, people will look back at *PSO* and laugh while saying something like "Wow. There were that few words back then?"

Other companies will soon begin to consider the possibilities, and will most likely improve upon it. If you're first, you cannot make something perfect.

Q Are there plans for translating *PSO* into more languages than the current five?

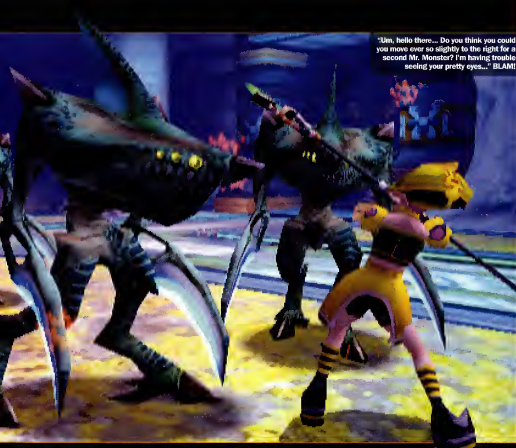
A For the moment, no. For example, Italian would be great, but it would take too much time to reimplement it. I would also like to include Portuguese and Korean—in Korea, the interest in the Internet is booming! But at this time, I will stay at five. I believe that in the future, there will be a company offering a system with ten languages!

Q How important is the identity of your character? How would players go about creating more than one character?

A It is simple. One VMU, one character. So if you put two VMUs in the controller, you will have access to two characters. If you have ten or 20 VMUs, you would be able to create that number of characters. >>







"Um, hello there... Do you think you could  
you move over so slightly to the right for a  
second Mr. Monster? I'm having trouble  
seeing your pretty eyes..." BLAM!



**Q** On that note, what about sequels?

**A** It is a possibility that *PSO* will evolve into a series, but developing this title alone has consumed pretty much all of our time and energy! However, as we get closer to releasing the game, I think many of the team members have begun to come up with all kinds of different features that they would have loved to include. So the appeal of making a sequel is getting stronger. Maybe we will decide to make a second episode instead of an Appendix disc [add-on or enhanced version discs are called appendix discs in Japan]. But it will still depend on how much new stuff we would be able to put inside of a *PSO II*. If the changes we'd like to implement or the features we'd like to add after the release of the first episode are not significant enough for a second episode to be developed, we may look into making an Appendix disc.

**Q** Both *PSO* and *Sonic* look amazing. How is it that Sonic Team is one of the only developers to get this sort of visual performance on Dreamcast?

**A** It is soooooo hard to get to this level. I really believe that every developer is working just as hard. I guess the big difference is in design sense. This is one strong point in our [team's] entire body of work, I think.

**Q** What are your expectations for *PSO*?

**A** One million. I would like *PSO* to be a million-selling title. But who knows? I know that the US will be our main market, and for the moment, feedback has been really great about the project. I really spent an infinite amount of time plunging deep into the machine of Dreamcast to see how it was meant to perform...what it was meant to be both ideally and realistically. And *PSO* was the clear answer. In a way, it's the killer app for Dreamcast. It uses every aspect of the system, including the most important feature, the modem. I hope that people really understand and truly enjoy this game, as they should.

## language, and *PSO* instantly adventurers' native tongues."

bonus of being able to work through the game in singleplayer mode, which enables you to buff up your character so you can avoid being shamed or taunted by other avatars online.

But don't count on finishing the game on your own. The monsters are tough and the bosses even more so: so you'll need all the help you can get from your fellow humans in order to call it a successful day in *PSO*.

With the game's impending release set for January, you won't have to wait long to test its waters for yourself. Will it be worth the six years we've spent without a new chapter in the *PS* series? We'd like to play through the final version before we make that call, but what we've seen so far hints strongly at an industry-changing title. *PSO* is about to become one of the biggest precedent-setting events in console gaming history.

Don't miss it.

## KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S FOUR

### Phantasy Star I

Where it all begins. Back in 1987, this first chapter follows heroine Ails and her three companions across the Algal Solar System, as they avenge the death of Ails' brother. Death, glory and a very tidy end: none await them.

### Phantasy Star II

Two years later, the sequel arrives. Government operative Rolf is sent to find out why the Mother Brain that rules a world called Mota has been corrupted, aided by Nel, a constructed being (i.e., hot android-type chick), and a soldier named Rudo. While battling, Rolf learns important things like why android chicks are so darn hot.

### Phantasy Star III

1991's installment included three heroes from three different time periods in a civil war setting. Returning to the Algal Solar System, the game follows Rity, Maia and Alisa (but android chick #3) as they draw ever-closer to...[drumroll] yet another shocking conclusion!

### Phantasy Star IV

1994: year of the mega-epic finale. Chaz Ashley embarks on a quest to decide the fate of the common. A new man, an Esper and an android chip in to help Chaz vanquish his foes and his fear in order to save the universe and pad his wallet with big earnings from the Hunter's Guild. The largest, longest and (some say) the best title in the entire series. We loved it.



# H A L F

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Animated Violence  
Animated Blood

# - L I F E<sup>®</sup>

## **"THE BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER OF ALL TIME..."**

**-Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine**



Just another day at the office. Or so you thought...until your experiment blew up in your face. Now, with aliens coming through the walls and a military death squad killing everything in site, you're scrambling to stay alive. Half-Life combines great storytelling with intense action and advanced technology to create what many consider to be the greatest action game experience of all time.

Plus, here for the first time is an entirely new Half-Life mission created exclusively for the Dreamcast - Blue Shift! In this huge new campaign, you take command of a security guard at the Black Mesa research facility and battle your way through the chaos of an alien invasion.



▼ Huge new mission, Half-Life: Blue Shift - designed just for the Dreamcast!



▼ Play the game that has won more than 50 Game of the Year awards from publications around the world.

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Speak  
Point!  
Punch

# Floigan Brothers

Brothers gonna work it out

**A**fter more than a year of NSA-like secrecy, Sega has finally allowed us to peek under the blouse of its highly-anticipated adventure title, *Floigan Brothers*. And we're happy to give you the full report on what may be the zaniest, kookiest and downright wackiest game you'll play this year.

**Taking place in a crazy 3D junkyard**, the game concerns two brothers, Moigle and Hoigle, whose mismatched size and intelligence quotients usher to mind fond memories of *Lenry*

and *George*. Ren and Stimpy and *Beyond Thunderdome*'s Master/Blaster. Players have direct control over Hoigle (the shorter and more competent of the two), but must learn to communicate with and take care of big, bad Moigle as well (although Moigle isn't exactly the sharpest tool in the shed, he has a mind—or at least an agenda—of his own). You'll have to get Moigle and Hoigle to work together—through both direct action and indirect manipulation. If Hoigle is unable to reach something on a roof, for example, you can

badger Moigle until he gets angry and throws Hoigle onto said roof.

## Oh, Brother... see if you can match 'em

Michael	David
Franz	Chong
Joel	Terrence
Dorrey	Emilio
Sean	Earn
Cheech	Simon
Philip	Tito
Charlie	Ethan
Noel	Marie
Simon	Hans

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**The plot focuses on an evil oil baron**, who discovers that the junkyard inhabited by the Floigans is actually the precise location of a lucrative oil field; so he attempts to put the brothers out of business. It's a competent retelling of a classic anti-big business parable, and it gives you ample incentive to get your lug of a brother to pull his own weight.

**What makes the game so distinctive**—aside from its Tex Avery-inspired brand of slapstick humor—is the detail evident in every part of its



"Foigian Bros: who doesn't love an oddball?" EVAN SHAMOON



Who runs Bartown? MASTER BLASTER RUNS BARTOWN. Foigian Brothers is definitely not your average vid-ogrm... No blood, no killing, no saving the universe, no kickflips, no first places, no first places, no breasts, no ohes, no death and no taxes.



Visual Concepts has promised top-notch (er-notch) voice-acting talent for the characters in Foigian Bros. Every line in the game will be voice-acted, which makes the kids (read: us) happy. Which way did he go, George?

design. Visual Concepts has created. Visual Concepts with full 3D movement, who are well able to access and interact with nearly everything in their surroundings. Some of these actions are necessary to move ahead in the game, while others will merely provoke some sort of sight-gag and/or emotional response; accidentally stumble into the river, for example, and you'll shoot out of the drainpipe.

**The player's relationship** with Moglie is important as well, since his evolution throughout the game will hinge greatly upon the way

in which he is treated. The more frustrated you become with the goofy doofus, the less friendly and responsive he will be towards you. It's a curiously converse nod to Lionhearts' upcoming Black and White and, depending on the depth it provides, it might just be the sort of interesting twist that'll take Foigian's gameplay over the top into excellence.

With wonderfully cartoonish 3D graphics, interesting and varied mini-games and the potential to take man-machine interaction to some entirely new plane, Sega may well have built itself one of the year's most inspired and enjoyable

sleepers. This oddball's got loads of talent. Here's hoping they get it right.

EVAN SHAMOON

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**  
PUBLISHED BY DEVELOPER VISUAL CONCEPTS  
GENIE ADVENTURE DESIGN (D. PLATTEN)  
RELEASE DATE: 07/2001

#### PLUSES [+]

Graphics are cartoony as hell, and the interaction with Moglie was cool.

#### MINUSES [-]

Some puzzles seemed a bit too obvious, while some seemed too obscure.

#### BOTTOM LINE [-]

Time will tell whether or not this game manages to capture that old LucasArts magic. We're crossing our toes.

# Welcome to COMING SOON

## Previewed This Month

Anticipation is sweet, and these DC games could be even sweeter. Read on... and find out what you'll be playing in months to come!

- 18 WHEELER: PAT 4/4** Breaker 1-9 you not your ears on?
- SONIC ADVENTURE 2/48** What's blue and has 'tude?
- PROJECT JUSTICE/50** Watch these rival schools duke it out!
- FIGHTING VIPERS 2/52** The return of a legendary 3D brawler.
- HEAD HUNTER/54** E3's mysterious game reveals its secrets...
- ALIEN FRONT ONLINE/56** Online, alien-smilin' goodness!
- TYPING OF THE DEAD/58** Weirdest Game, Ever.



Is the keyboard mightier than the zombie? Fran Reyes thinks so. She's so into it that she made a harness for her keyboard just like this one. In the game (page 68), 18 Wheeler lets you take to the open roads of America, in crazy Crazy Taxi style. (page 46)

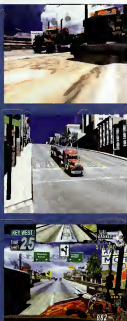
## INCOMING!

All Dreamcast, all the time: planned releases for 2000 and beyond

Banjo & Kazooie	Dec	Gecko Markin Racing	Feb
BANG! Gunplay Elite Shooter	Dec	Out Trigger Shooter/Action	Feb
Charger N Blast Action	Dec	Project Justice: Fighting	Feb
Coaster Works Sim	Dec	Alien in the Dark IV Adventure	Feb
Ducati World Racing	Dec	Matt Hoffman's ProBMX Sports	Feb
Evil Dead: Hell to the King Action	Dec	Commandos 2 Action	Mar
Grandia II RPG	Dec	Foigian Brothers Action	Mar
Half-Life FPS	Dec	Soul Reaver 2 Adventure	Mar
Heroes of Might & Magic 3 RPG	Dec	The Mummy Action	Mar
Iron Aces Flight Sim	Dec	18 Wheeler Amps Trucking Driving	Mar
KOP: Evolution Fighting	Dec	Gaga Boogie Online/Action	April
Max Steel Action	Dec	Bombberman Online Action	Q2
Prince of Persia 3 Action	Dec	II Blood Action	Q2
Record of Lodoss War RPG	Dec	WSB2K2 Sports	Spring
Resident Evil 2 Action/Adv.	Dec	Crazy Taxi 2 Action	Summer
Stunt GP Racing	Dec	Samba 2001 Music	Summer
Surf Rocket Racer Racing	Dec	Base Fishing 2 Sports	Summer
System Shock 2 Shooter/RPG	Dec	FanNation Online RPG	Summer
Sno Cross Int. Champ. Racing	Dec	Agartha Adventure	'01
The Grinch Action	Dec	Black And White Strategy	'01
Tomb Raider: Chronicles Action/Adv.	Dec	Buffy the Vampire Slayer Action	'01
Xtreme Sports Sports	Dec	Head Hunter Adventure	'01
World's Deadliest: Pub. Chases Driving	Q4	Heavy Metal MMA Shooter	'01
Star Wars Super Bomber Battle	Q4	Legend of the Blackmonsters RPG	'01
Urban Chase Action	Q4	Strategic Online Warfare 2025 Action	'01
Amadeus II Shooter/RPG	Jan	NBA Hoops Sports	'01
Dark Angel: Vamp Apocalypse Action	Jan	Planet of the Apes Action	'01
Daytona Network Racing Riding	Jan	Peacekeepers Strategy	'01
Dragon Riders Adventure	Jan	Roswell Conquest Action	'01
Phantasy Star Online Online RPG	Jan	Soldier of Fortune Action/Shoots	'01
Typing of the Dead Ed. horror	Jan	Sonic Adv. 2 Platformer	'01
Unreal Tournament FPS	Jan	Gaillion Adventure	TBA
Alien Front Online Shooter/Action	May	Picasso Action	TBA
		Quirk RPG	TBA



KEY WEST  
TIME LIMIT 21



The game uses a modified version of the Crazy Taxi engine, but we'd almost go out on a limb and say that it looks better than it plays. It's especially pretty when you see it in person, even in its unfinished state. We were very impressed with how sharp and clean the lines were (these shots don't quite convey that, of course, but then, the camera always adds ten pounds).

# 18 Wheeler: Pro Trucker

Will Sega haul ass or drop a load? Well so far, it looks truckin' awesome.

**I**f *Crazy Taxi* is crazy, then this 18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker is downright ludicrous. But hey, there's a first for everything. And if Sega has anything to say about it, "everything" includes a whole new genre of cross-country trucking sims. With the exception of cat-calls, CB radios and "resting" at private rest-stops, this is about as close as many of us will get to being real-life truck-drivers.

You begin by choosing a driver and a big rig (you'll have four to choose from), and the type/size/flavor of the cargo you're going to haul from New York to San Francisco (and no, you can't choose a flatbed full of downtown New Yorkers migrating Westward to find a

mellower, gentler City). The heavier your payload, the more difficult the handling—and, of course, the larger the bounty you'll receive at the end of the line, if you get there intact.

Once you've taken care of these particulars, it's time to stretch your legs, climb up into your tricked-out big rig and head out to the open road, where you'll face off against

the baddest trucker we've seen since Lardo Marge—your remarkably diabolical arch-rival, Lizard Tail. Ever seen Steven Spielberg's 1971 movie *Duel*? The one where this guy gets

chased by a sinister, faceless truck driver like, unto death does him part, for the length of a feature film? Well, Lizard Tail is on a par with that Faceless Scary Truck Dude on any scale of pure evil. He's a slimy bastard who's willing to do anything he can to make his way west before you do, from cutting you off to dumping his cargo out on the road to hurling—gasp!—undeniably harsh insults in your general direction.

Now, throw in some truly overzealous law enforcement officers, some fast-forwarded, amazingly hyperactive weather patterns and—"another gasp!"—a pile of debris even higher than the mound on Chris's desk, and you've got something that's a little better and badder than



Alice Nunn  
(Pro West)

## Scary as Hell

OKAY, WE'RE MAN (AND WOMAN) ENOUGH to admit it: The first time trucker-of-all-truckers Lardo Marge went all crazy-like in Pro West's *Big Adventure*, we were very scared. In memory of that great moment, we're going to play a little bit of the old Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon with his, Alice Nunn, who so gracefully played the role of Lardo Marge. Here goes: Alice Nunn plays the woman parolee member in *Who's that Girl?* with Madonna. Madonna joins Geena Davis in *A League of Their Own*, who joins Harvey Keitel in *Thelma and Louise*. Keitel acted alongside Debra in *Arrested Streets* (among others), and then Debra teamed up with Kevin Bacon in *Stripes*. And there's your six degrees.



Madonna  
(Who's That Girl?)

Geena Davis  
(League of Their Own)

Harvey Keitel  
(Thelma & Louise)

Robert De Niro  
(Stripes)

Kevin Bacon  
(Bacon)



Saga has modeled the game's level system to mimic the American highway system. And let's face it, the game itself mimics real life: when's the last time you saw a truck that wasn't driving like a directionally dyslexic but out of h-ll?



As you approach an SUV on this freeway, think about all of the times you've had to crawl through supermarket parking lots behind some 4-wheel-drive vehicle, that slow-d to a near halt every time it hit one of those pleasant little suburban speed bumps. Yup, it bugs the hell out of us, too. Kill, Butch, Kill!

your average cross-country drive. If an orangutan (or other primate of equal or lesser



## Truckin' Slang

back row n. The area at some truck stops where hookers hang out having shutter trouble v. Falling asleep, as in, "He was having shutter trouble when he hit that tree." motion lesion n. Fuel, plain white wrapper n. Unmarked cop car. reefer n. Refrigerated cargo trailer. huddin' dispatcher brains v. Pulling an empty trailer. "Soulbender" freeway side up adj. Flipped over. For more truckin'-speak on the web, visit <http://www.vrta.biz.gov/~slang/truckin/slang.html>

value) rode shotgun in these trucks as your weedy and whimsical sidekick, this game could pass for a fantastically successful feature film.

These rigs handle like the multi-ton beasts that they are—tight turns and precision steering are nowhere to be found, so you'll be learning a whole new style of driving. Destroying the relatively puny cars and SUVs in your path is quite cathartic—and especially cool is the game's slipstream feature, which gives you an added burst of speed whenever you place yourself in the wake of another truck.

Much like Crazy Taxi, the game manages to thrive on quirky and addictive gameplay in ways that you could never

imagine unless you'd played it. And with four levels and 20 stages along the way, you'd better be sure to pack a whole lot of NoDoz for the trip.

**Much like its yellow-checkered colleague, the Dreamcast version of 18 Wheeler takes the standard arcade single-player mode and tears into it like a ravenous pack of wild hyenas. Not only does the game provide an assortment of mini-games—like the 'Parking Challenge', where players must race against the clock as they burn rubber through a cramped trucking depot—but it also taps into the glory that is multi-player gaming. 18 Wheeler jacks into SegaNet for some real, honest head-to-head**

racing mania, adding a few online-only options—like a Score Attack mode which allows players to post their single-player scores for worldwide ranking—just to round out the menu of fun.

And as if all this wasn't enough, you're even able to save up cash to buy fuzzy dice and roach-clip feather-type things with which to decorate your massive vehicle. Save up enough of these things and you'll obtain the ultimate prize: a crazy super-powered horn that's strong enough to blast objects out of the way with the sheer density of its sound waves. (How cool is that?)

The game still has a fair amount of development to go before its January release; hopefully the team will test this

time constructively. Muchos minigames and a good soundtrack would make all the difference (hint, hint). Doubtfur? Try the game on our demo disc in this issue if you don't believe our hype. EVAN SHAMON

Critic's Verdict

# Dreamcast

**PUNISHER: THE SECTOR** (XBOX)  
**GOING UNDER: GUN ORIGIN** (PS2)  
**ONLINE TEST RELEASE DATE** FEBRUARY

**PLUSES** [+]  
 Absurdly great concept, excellent design  
 And the graphics are twice pretty

**MINUSES** [-]  
 Much like real trucking, we suppose, this runs the risk of growing old

**BOTTOM LINE** [...]

We can't wait to stop making stupid truck references and join the game



Sega has stated that this city, which looks exactly like San Francisco, is not—repeat, not—San Francisco. Sure. Whatever. Anyway, watching Sonic board down these hills is an amazing experience—it really exceeds the punch of anything in Sonic Adventure 1.



# Sonic Adventure 2

Like our mamas told us, the 87th time is always the charm

**U**t's true. According to Sega, Sonic characters have been in 86 games (and other programs) since Sonic first burst onto the scene in 1991. Damn. Of course, the hedgehog has only had two outings so far on Dreamcast, and one of those was a party game. With Sonic Adventure 2, Yuji Naka and Sonic Team are seeking to redefine the character, the gameplay, and even the Dreamcast as dramatically as the first Sonic the Hedgehog redefined Genesis and gaming itself a decade ago.

And from early reports, it looks like the company is well on its way to succeeding. First shown in very early form at the

last E3, Sonic Adventure 2 has come a long way in six months. Originally scheduled for release this Spring, it has been pushed back to Fall 2001 (that's the tentative US release date, anyway) to ensure that the team has enough time to make the game everything they want it to be. And if the development process succeeds, Sonic

Adventure 2 will totally change your perception of just what a Dreamcast game can be.

How? The graphics, for one. The textures are far beyond anything seen in any realtime game to date, on any system, and the levels show clear proof that Sonic Team has been getting intimate with the bare metal of the system. Each level has

been carefully constructed to maximize the total current potential of Dreamcast. Draw distances are massive, and huge vertical drops are common. Clipping has been all but eliminated, and several new libraries of lighting and special effects are in the works. The result should be an absolute visual dream.

**Although only a few characters** have been revealed so far (Sonic, Knuckles, and Dr. Robotnik), sources tell us that five new characters, pulled from former Sonic games on Genesis, Game Gear and arcade platforms, will also join the party—introducing new styles of game play in the process. As usual, of course, the bulk of the play will involve Sonic facing off against Robotnik's devious machines and weapons, but in this game, you can expect to see something a little more sinister than good old Dr. Robotnik as well.

That's right: Dark Sonic will indeed make a reappearance in the series. There's no



## The Sonic Hedgehog Gene

**DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A GENE** named after Sega's mascot? The 'sonic hedgehog' gene (named, depending on who you ask, after the blue dye used to identify it or its spiky appearance) apparently helps regulate anterior-posterior limb patterning in animals—and oddly enough, it's also about to become part of a pharmaceutical cocktail served to balding men in order to stimulate hair growth. It's a pretty popular gene, too, featured in several dozen articles across the Net.





It's Chao chaos! Just as in the last game, collecting, raising, and keeping Chaos healthy and happy plays a major role in the game. It's a departure from the typical action found in Sonic games, but it's a welcome addition that keeps things interesting. According to a Sonic Team spokesman, there will be VMU games included with Sonic Adventure 2. Hopefully, some kind of Chao wrangling will be part of the VMU lineup.

official word on just what he'll do or how he'll do it, but we're led to expect to see some serious challenges to our favorite blue mascot.

And as in the last game, the management of Chaos will play a major role; you'll have to collect and regroup them from all over the world. It's possible to have limited communication with the Chaos, but more importance is placed on how you manage them. You've got to bring them up, take care of them, heal them when they're sick, etc. Just like in Sonic Adventure 1, there will be mini-games aplenty for your VMU—and a few hidden inside the main game, as well.



## Sole Reaver

CROSS TRAINERS made to grind? Remotely available only as power-ups, grinded-able sneakers can now be found online. [www.sole-reaver.com](http://www.sole-reaver.com) features hard plastic up's set into rubber soles, which can grind rails and curbs with ease (after you've peeled off the "Iy peeling off this sticker you waive your rights to sue" sticker).

To keep Sonic fresh in his 87th outing, Sonic Team has equipped him with several new accessories, the coolest

probably being a new pair of shoes that enable him to grind on various surfaces. These shoes and other items permit the hog to have tons more interaction with the 3D backgrounds of levels than he ever had before—one amazing sequence in the demo, for instance, shows Sonic dropping from a helicopter with a surfboard on his feet, all the way to the street below...where he proceeds to surf the not-San Francisco hills. Underwater sequences are also planned, and we assume that the task of keeping Sonic from drowning by locating air bubbles will factor heavily in gameplay. (While we're on the subject,

does anything ever get your heart pumping like waiting for a bubble to show up in a classic Sonic game, as Sonic slowly runs out of air while music swells in the background? Us, neither.)

Although there's no word yet on online play, smart money says that there'll be at least some kind of internet component to the game—although exactly how it would work is unknown at this time.

At any rate, it's clear that Sonic Team plans to take its mascot to the next level, with hundreds of new additions to the game. Hopefully, the team also plans to shore up the one

weak point in Sonic Adventure 1: its sometimes out-of-control control. CHRISTOPHE KABATON



Oh, that Knuckles! Most of your favorite Sonic characters are back this time, including Knuckles and, of course, the evil Dr. Robotnik (who, we hear, got his doctorate in Slavic Linguistics and did his dissertation translating an old Russian text). Weird.



## The Original Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM  
GENRE: SONIC; SENSORS: JAPAN; PLAYERS: 1 ONLINE  
TBA RELEASE DATE: FALL 2001

### PLUSES [+]

A new Sonic game, with more to love than ever before! We can't wait to get the word.

### MINUSES [-]

Let's hope the team tweaked the controls from the first game.

### BOTTOM LINE [-]

Sonic is approaching his tenth birthday, and while there have been some highs and lows in the past decade, no one can make you realize just how cool games can be as well as Sonic can.



Team special attacks can be performed any time during a fight, but you'll have to power up your special attack bar to unleash the most devastating team attacks.



Many fan favorites from the Rival Schools series return for Project Justice. Schoolgirl Hinata is back for more of her high-kickin' antics, as is Juvenile slugger Shome, who displays some rather nasty hot 'n' ball specials that send opponents flying. Along with these returning characters come a ton of new playable fighters. To know 'em is to love 'em. But will these crazy kids ever graduate?

## Rival Schools 3: Project Justice

3D fighting: three times the fun?

**W**any Capcom fans may have been turned off by previous Rival Schools games, with their precocious, cutesy-than-Olsen-twins look and humor. If you were one of those people, you missed out on experiencing some of Capcom's best—yes, we said "best"—3D Japanese fighting games. We're not afraid to admit how much we loved these games. Somehow, the extremely exaggerated moves of the Rival Schools games seemed to blend perfectly with the unique look of the Rival Schools series. And fortunately, Project Justice seems to be at least as good as its truly excellent predecessors.

As in the previous games, moves are executed in the typical Street Fighter fashion.

Combos are carried out exactly as they are in the Versus games; players can chain together a series of regular attacks with special and super moves, in crazy, high flying air combos. Matches are between



two teams of three characters, and although there's no Tag feature available, there are plenty of tag team combos to satisfy any combo nut. These Tag combos are even simple to pull off—usually, all you have to do to activate them is to tap two buttons simultaneously. Of course, getting them to actually work in a truly effective combo takes practice and skill; PJ is hardly a button-masher.

**One aspect of this setup that** Capcom has drastically changed—and seems to be changing in all of its fighting games—is the control configuration. Now there are only four attack buttons: weak and fierce punches, and weak and fierce kicks. After seeing how well this setup works in Marvel 2 and Capcom Vs. SNK, we are honestly happy that Capcom favors this control system; those two

middle buttons now seem to be completely superfluous.

And to keep players coming back for more, Capcom (as usual) has included a number of modes like Training, Story, Versus, and Survival modes. In order to unlock and obtain all of the secret characters and good stuff, you'll have to earn points in a purchasing system, as in Marvel Vs. Capcom 2.

**And those of you who disliked** the unique look of the other games will be delighted to know that, although the goofy character designs are still the same, fighting is set in a darker, more serious atmosphere. Hopefully, this, in addition to very decent graphics, will attract a larger audience (although really, the

### Rival Schoolers Unite

With its anime-esque premise and quirky characters, it's no wonder that the Rival Schools series has garnered so much attention from Capcom fighting enthusiasts. Capcom Japan even went so far as to sponsor a fanart contest on its website for Rivaling Justice Academy otaku, who liked to do their own renditions of Baring, Shoma and the rest of the gang. For US fans, the site to keep an eye on is definitely the Rival Schools Network, which lists pretty much everything you'd ever want to know about the various students, teachers and miscellaneous bawdy characters that populate the series. Go to <http://www2.sailorjag.com/index.shtml> to get properly schooled.



Part of Project Justice's appeal stems from each team's 'Intro' and back story. In Japan, a whole manga series has been built off the fighting series—and we can understand why.



Batsu delivers some sweet street justice to Akira in an aerial kick attack that'll rival (schools) say Matrix special affect move.



Another aspect of the series' draw for fans is the number of unique specials and story points. After all, this is a game based around the premise that high school students are all about knocking the snot out of each other to defend their school's honor...or something. Anyhow, thanks to this game's new characters, its storyline is clearly going to be playing a central role, and story points simply make good sense.

## The Momo Factor

ALL FANS WOULD agree that Capcom has a singular knack for throwing in an offbeat, whacked-out character just to add some 'charm' in each of their games. This is a phenomenon we've conveniently labeled "The Momo Factor." Resident Evil has Frank and Tiel, while Street Fighter has Dhalsim and Blanka, and the MegaMan series has...well, all the characters are a little strange. Project Justice has Momo—the respect-earning minor with a penchant for busting out with dastardly combos and a name that ought to belong to either a mobster or a gorilla.



gameplay itself ought to be enough to capture the hearts of true gamers—come on, people, it's not like we're asking you to eat, like, a truckload of yams, or something! This really is an awesome series).

Capcom remembered to add all of the extra stuff and tweak the control interface, but there are still some pretty significant problems that have yet to be addressed. First, it's quite clear that the company's 3D games tend to lack the tight feeling of speed and precision that you'll see in any of its 2D fighters. And thus far, Project Justice is no exception. For example, whenever characters jump, they seem to float—which makes landing

two-in-ones from the air way too difficult. Also, chain combos and air combos are sluggish—i.e., the lag time between tapping the buttons and seeing the action appear onscreen is too long.

Ironically, the problems inherent in Capcom's 3D games seem to be caused by the fact that they're all based on 2D precedents. Capcom has simply taken the formulas established in 2D and thrown them into the 3D ring, without allowing for the difference in mediums. And besides proving that this method of 2D-to-3D transition just doesn't work correctly, this narrow, 2D-based mentality has caused innovation throughout the

realm of fighting games to stagnate. If Capcom truly wants to revolutionize this genre again, it'll have to start with the question, "What does 3D mean to me?" and not treat that third dimension like an afterthought. CHET BARBER

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
GENRE: FIGHTING ORIGIN: JAPAN PLAYERS: 1-2  
ONLINE: NO RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

### PLUSES [+]

Unique character designs, new control interface, lots of secret stuff, cool soundtrack, lots of combos

### MINUSES [-]

Not a whole lot of innovative features

### BOTTOM LINE [-]

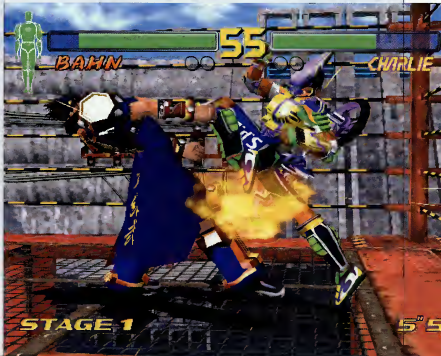
With decent controls, tons of combos, a variety of characters, the Justice league surely will not disappoint fans



Somewhere between *Virtua Fighter* and *Soul Calibur* lies *Fighting Vipers*. Most of the attacks are hard to land, but weapons combat via bikes (top) and guitars (above) also feature prominently. Each character has a few special moves—and if he (or she) is holding an object, this object is usually what the move involves. Check out the body-monitor next to the power bar. It monitors your armor status.



The action is way more frenetic than in your average Sega fighting game, although it's still a little calmer than in some of Capcom's 2D blow-outs. Check out the lighting effect on this hit blow, and the style of armor—all of it can be blown off with the appropriate hits.



# Fighting Vipers 2

The return—and certainly not the tomb—of the unknown classic

**A**lthough the sands of time have erased *Fighting Vipers* from most gamers' memories, true fans remember the arcade brawl (and its great Saturn conversion) as a high water mark in fighting. With its use of items like skateboards as weapons and its wonderfully destroyable walls, it featured innovations not seen again until games like *Power Stone* and *DOA 2* erupted. Even better, it offered a huge amount of fun and freneticism (is that a word?) [No, but we'll let it slide.—Ed.] without being a button masher, which made it a great counterpoint to the

austerity and subtlety of a game like *Virtua Fighter*.

Now, after years of neglect, a sequel is finally coming to DC. While no US release date has been discussed, it's a pretty sure bet that the game will make the

## Pepsi Man-san!

ONE OF THE COOLEST FEATURES in the Japanese version of FV was its secret character, Pepsi Man. The Silver Starfire-esque figure is modeled after the popular mascot of Pepsi in Japan, a hero who delivers Pepsi to those in need.



Jump from Japan—if it's only half again as good as the original.

**True to form, *Fighting Vipers 2*** keeps the gameplay fast and furious. Interactive walls put in another appearance—to affect gameplay, once again—and the clever armor system returns, too.

Basically, each character starts off the game wearing "armor." Each suit is stylistically appropriate for each character, so it doesn't always look like the shiny stuff that medieval knights used to wear. And it doesn't make you invincible—it simply offers some protection during the early stages, at the cost of some limitations to fighting moves. In

fact, you may decide either to let the other character smash it off of your character slowly (or quickly, depending on the ferocity of the attack), or throw it off yourself. In any case, watching it fly across the arena adds some serious visual punch to matches—as does the ability to explode walls and to throw characters right through them. You can even finish a match by smashing your opponent with a meteor!

The game features five modes: Arcade, Versus, Survival, Training and Random, and there's also supposed to be an Internet option—although we don't expect actual online play. So. Two years after the release of the

arcade version of *FV2*, the only question is whether a conversion can stand up against *Soul Calibur* and *DOA 2*. We'll find out soon!

CHRISTOPHE KAGOTANI

Official Magazine

Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: SEGA WORKS  
BOX: THE LIP GROUND: JONES PLAYERS: 2  
ONLINE: NONE RELEASE DATE: 2001 WE HOPE

PLUSES (+)

Tone of action, fast pace; armor and walls make innovative additions

MINUSES (-)

Warning: may be a mile wide, but only an inch deep

BOTTOM LINE [-]

It should look great, but will all gamers like the fighting style? Time will tell.





**"If you get your ass kicked,  
it's probably me on the  
other end of the line."**

**- Fred Durst, SegaNet Member**



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"Hi, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Head Hunter, a bounty hunter in futuristic Southern California. I go around riding my motorcycle and shooting bad people. Oh, and did I mention that you can bounce a quarter off my rock hard abs? No?"



# Head Hunter

Mr. Fett, take off that tiara—we're passing the crown to a new bounty hunter

One of the most tantalizing surprises that Sega slipped into its recent E3 lineup—bristling with denials, disclaimers, and the PR equivalent of a flashing neon sign saying "Keep Out!"—was a mysterious little title called *Head Hunter*. Rather fittingly, it was being developed in the snowy wastes of northern Europe by Swedish company, Amuze. But beyond a handful of screenshots and some rough video footage, little else was revealed about the game. Until now.

**Taking place in a fully-realized 3D world, *Head Hunter* mixes an unlikely story with some very**

promising gameplay details in order to give gamers a sneak peek at what the world would be like if the ESRB Rating Board replaced the government. Sound interesting? It is.

*Head Hunter* welcomes gamers to an altered US of the near-future, wherein governmental censorship has placed a stranglehold on the culture and law enforcement lands in the hands of private contractors called "Head hunters."

You enter this new world as a shady, shades-sportin' bounty hunter. It's your job to make sure that those wacky kids aren't sneaking any violence into their videogames or movies. The role is double-edged, in

that you'll be using violence to enforce a no-violence law...which is kind of a weird contradiction, but (or therefore)

it makes the whole premise just that much more realistic.

There'll be plenty of evil factions to take down, through

a long and difficult process—which will somehow enable our hero, in the end, to dismantle the overbearing censorship laws altogether. Sounds pretty compelling...but you have to remember that these tidbits are little more than conjecture as *Head Hunter* is still so incredibly early in its development.

**With a storyline that's so fuzzy around the edges at this point, it's the gameplay and the concept that remain the game's strong suits.** As evidenced by these screens, you'll have a choice between how you'd like to travel to your various rendezvous points during the game: by foot or by motorcycle. And

Head Hunter vs. Renegade vs. Mike Salmon



Is it us, or is Lorenzo "Renegade" Lamas the perfect person to be playing hard hunter? Barring that, we recommend former PCXL editor Mike Salmon. Mike used to have that Renegade 'do, and while he's cut his hair to catch up with the times (unlike Lorenzo), he's still got just the right amount of style and machismo for the role. Plus, since leaving PCXL, Mike has been working as a bounty hunter in San Francisco—although he usually drives a Jeep, not a motorcycle. Of course, he's married; that explains everything.



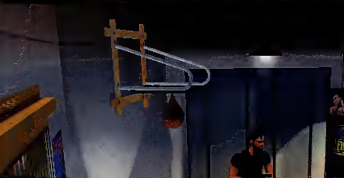
#### Bathroom Hunter

This poor soul looks like he's eaten a few too many Chicken Crispy lunches at Chili's; he's holding his gut tighter than Evan holds onto reviewable Disney games. In this screen, he finds (at last!) what he has been searching for—the bathroom. Unfortunately, it seems like the stall is occupied. Hope he can hold it—or else, "Clean up on Alise 4, please!"

Let's hope this game is a cross between the *Resident Evil* series and *Shenmue*.



After you're done drooling over the reflections in that far store window (furr), get a load of the sporty bike our hero gets to ride around on. You better get used to it, since this is going to be your main mode of transportation, as well as a nifty way to unlock cool new features and areas in the story mode. Line *Mad Max*, without the nuclear waste or not. *Head Hunter* also features a tournament "dome." Right on.



At this point in *Head Hunter*'s development, there's not a whole lot going on in the game's environments other than the random punching bag (above) or a closed door (left). While we're quite sure this isn't enough to really get you all excited about playing this game, but from what we've seen in video form, you can expect loads of enemies and thugs wandering the halls (or gyms) for you to attack or be attacked by.

transportation isn't the only reason you'll need access to a two-wheeled vehicle. You'll also need your road hog in order to face off with dozens of challenges across the globe in the ominously named Aquadome.

**Yes, you heard right. This** is where *Head Hunter*'s Internet capabilities come into play: because, in the Aquadome, you'll be racing up to seven other DC owners. If you've got the skills to win, you'll unlock new features and items that will become available to you in the game's story mode. How's that for incentive?

And this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what Amuze

is plotting to include. Cool extras like being able to use your VMU as a "beeper" in order to receive different messages or hints makes great use of an unjustifiably under-used peripheral. You'll also be able to use the Net for more than racing, by downloading numeric codes to access now or secret areas that

are otherwise inaccessible.

All of these details combined are supposed to immerse you up to your earlobes in what Sega deems "an interactive movie." That can mean a lot of different things, both good and bad. If it ends up with the "interactive" feel of, say, *Shenmue*, then we're all for it. Imagine a

fully realized world populated by various characters that you must talk to and interact with in order to further the action-driven plot. On the other hand, if it means "two minutes of gameplay in between three continuous cinematics," well, forget it. Who knows which way *Head Hunter* will ultimately jump—but we're hoping for the former.

pages of **ODCM**—we'll be sure to tell you how it's coming along.

FRANCISCA REYES



#### Gratuitous Boba Fett Boxout #03

As a bounty hunter poster boy, Boba Fett may have a few issues to teach to the lead character in *Head Hunter*. Because we don't have all of the details on the game yet, we can't tell you exactly what these lessons might be about, but that isn't what you really want to see here, anyway, is it? You just want another *Star Wars*-related boxout! And that's all the reason we need to write one. Here's a question: do the pages of **ODCM** contain more meaningless references to *SW*, or to Yui! Nakes?

**While no firm date has been** given for the game's release, you can expect it to be poised to launch sometime toward the later half of '01. If it lives up its promise, you can bank on a lot of headlines hailing it as the Next Big Thing in action/adventure gaming. Maybe even in the

**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: AMUZE GAMES  
40,000,000 BYTES (100MB) 1-PLAYER  
100% TBA ONLINE (YES) RELEASE DATE: 2001

#### PLUSES (+)

Loads of realistic environments and lots of potential. As it stands right now, the ambition level here is amazing.

#### MINUSES (-)

Whether or not that ambition level will be met, we don't know. Early footage showed the game running slowly and sparsely, but the key word is "early."

#### BOTTOM LINE [-]

If we had to put money on whether or not it'll turn out lovely, we'd bet YES. Sega usually comes through with the goods.



Check out the handles in the lower corners (left): you'll quickly develop a "rep"—good or bad—among other players. The graphic effects (above) are totally sweet, especially the alien slime.

# Alien Front Online

In this part of the space 'hood, everyone can hear you scream...

**A**lien Front Online features a hackneyed plot, a gone-before gameplay, and a bafflingly unimpressive array of vehicles and weapons. And it should be number-one on your most-wanted list. Confused? Try looking at the third word in the title. Online. Okay. Now hold this thought while we get through the part that we didn't actually sound that great.

In a burst of extra-terrestrial originality, the alien Triclops have decided to come to Earth, enslave (and probably eat) humanity, devastate the planet, drive slow in the fast lane and any other of a host of antisocial actions. Not surprisingly, it falls to you and your team of crack tank-drivers to stop the

madness by fighting massive armored battles across Tokyo, Washington DC and other places where humans and aliens traditionally clash. That's right. You drive a tank, fighting against organic, living, tank-like alien mechs. And yes, we just said alien twice. You get the idea, though. In the arcade version, you control your tank with real tank-style controls, but since we have no twin sticks in the US, on Dreamcast, you'll just have to use your D-pad.

**Now here's the cool part:** not only has the gameplay reached a level of transcendental sublimity that we haven't seen in the arcade since Tokyo Wars from Namco, but you actually

can play online in teams of up to four human tanks versus four alien tanks. And you can play in any combination of arcade machines versus Dreamcasts. And you have your own permanent online handle that you can use at home or in the arcade. AND, thanks to Sega's new Dream Call technology, you can talk in realtime—to everyone else who's playing. Call in orders to your teammates. Taunt your enemies. Cry for help. Beg for mercy. Shout in triumph or scream in defeat.

Although the game is a fine single-player experience, anyone who's played it in the arcade can tell you that the close-in levels, blind alleys and killing fields beg for team-

mates, which ever side you're playing on. Being able to speak to your mates (you can either limit communication to team members or talk trash with everyone playing) adds an entirely new element, making the game just that much more immersive and enabling a new level of strategy in the play.

**Luckily, too, the speech feature** occurs against the backdrop of an impeccably designed game. We took some shots a minute ago at the conventionality of gameplay, but in fact, it makes sense. This is your traditional tank combat

game. You can choose (on either side) from three tanks, with the predictable speed-armor-weapons tradeoffs. There are the predictable power-ups—tactical nukes, flamethrowers, homing missiles, helifires, and grenade launchers for the humans, and gravity balls, guided drones, cloaking spores and mortar showers for the Triclops.

But—and this is crucial—A) this doesn't mean the game is bad. It possesses amazingly designed levels, and the control (at least in the arcade) is astonishingly good, making it one of the better tank games







The juxtaposition of realistic war machines and bizarre, organic alien tanks is pretty cool (left). Tokyo gets destroyed again (above). Alien goop in the capital? Believe it (top left). At least the aliens are honest about their plans for the citizens of earth (top right).

## Tank Combat Past

The first tank combat game was Atari's innovatively titled coin-op, *Tank*. (Trivia: it was the first post-Pong arcade hit). It basically sported the same gameplay as the 2800 pack-in game, *Combat*: you control a

tank and shoot bullets at another tank. Sometimes the bullets would ricochet off the walls and obstacles, and sometimes the tanks (or shots) would be invisible. The next major milestone was Namco's scrolling, scaling, top-down arcade masterpiece *Assault*—the gameplay was pretty much the same, but things were much prettier. After that, Namco again moved things forward with *Tokyo Wars*—a networkable full-size arcade 3D tank combat cabinet. PC players get into the online act with the seriously multi-player *Tanarus* (Trivia: it was the game Verant did just before *EvrQuest*), but it took the Dreamcast to add real voice communication to the mix.



we've played. And B) if you're going to add in 4-player team play, it's better, we'd argue, to add this new element to an established play style than to expect gamers to learn a whole new type of game at the same time that they're having to employ real team-play strategy for what may be the very first time.

Graphically, this is a first-party Dreamcast game—which means that it looks great. The levels look great, and there are tons of weapons and lighting effects to keep things interesting. Human vehicles (M1A1 tank, Merkava, and M-109) all look like their real world counterparts (two-legged walker, four-legged spider walker and hoverdrone)

look a lot like the Grey ships you probably saw a hundred times on field trips to Area 51 when you were a kid.

**Despite the challenges of 8-player online play,** animations are also smooth and super-fast. The levels are small, but perfectly formed for maximum carnage in fighting—and everything in the level is destructible: you can indeed blow your way through buildings. The overall feeling is Beirut '86: dodging for cover, moving to cover your buddies, and kicking some serious alien ass in tight urban quarters.

Planned Dreamcast enhancements include extra weapons and vehicles, new deathmatch maps, and a

brand new story mode. Plus, you can bring your VMU to the arcade, unlock special secrets and then take them home and use them on your Dreamcast version. So.

*AlienFront Online?* Cool.  
CHRIS CHARLA

## Official Magazine Dreamcast

PUBLISHED BY USA DEV MEDIA REMOTE TANK COMBAT  
ONLINE PLAYERS 1 ONLINE  
RELEASE DATE MAY 2001

### PLUSES [+]

Voice chat, 8-player combat mayhem, arcade + DC play, etc.

### MINUSES [-]

Tank combat + done before

### BOTTOM LINE [-]

This is gonna be killer! We've been waiting for the opportunity to yell, 'Go! Go! Go! He's on your tank!' and have it mean something for years now.



## PERFECT 09

Rats!  
Rats!

We can't think of a better word to describe a situation in which a decaying zombie pops out of the water, just as we are trying to save mankind. Rats indeed, good zombie...rats, indeed.

## Mavis Beacon: Typist ... or Zombie?

EVERYONE LOVES MAVIS and her extremely helpful typing programs. If it weren't for Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing Ver. 9 on Macintosh, we'd all be handwriting our reviews and thus forcing you, dear reader, to decipher our crap cursive on purple dotted prints. But imagine our surprise when we discovered that Mavis Beacon is nothing more than a fictional avatar (a la Barbie by James) created by the software company to put a pretty face on those wonderful tutorials! We were actually kind of hoping to expose her as a zombie, but instead she's merely nonexistent...which is just as good, right?



## PERFECT 08

Unlike the original, ToTD packs plenty of weird little mini-games within its zombie-infested gameplay in order to keep gamers pounding away at the keys. It's a cool addition to some already kickin' game play.

Questions will be displayed in the center of the screen. Type the answers quickly!

TOWER Type 8000

PRESS ENTER KEY  
CERTIFIED 1Dryer  
DryerHashed  
Hashed

## Typing of the Dead

Zombies and literacy: two great tastes that taste great together

**U** typing and zombies... rarely (okay, never) have the twin met in such a strange venue as Segi's upcoming *Typing of the Dead*, a near-remake of its classic arcade-to-DC lightgun shooter, *House of the Dead 2*. Originally released in Japan in order to promote the use of the DC keyboard, *Typing of the Dead* was warmly welcomed. But on the our side of the pond, the game has remained little more than an oddity of note (a typed note, of course). But this could change when the game releases Stateside in January.

The premise is exactly the same as the one found in *House of the Dead 2*: kill various attacking zombies in order to save a town overrun with all sorts

of malodorous undead vermin. The catch is that you'll be doing it all with the aid of your keyboard, instead of with your lightgun or controller. Players will be challenged to quickly type various phrases and words that pop up on the screen in order to fend off the monsters—it's fast, furious

and educational enough to make any Junior high school typing teacher proud.

Everything in the game has been adjusted to suit the new peripheral as well, including in-game cinematics featuring the cast of heroes donning DC backpacks

and strap-on keyboards instead of guns. Boy, is it a sight to cherish.

And while it may sound slightly silly, the actual gameplay is tough, challenging and pretty damn fun. Even the most seasoned typists, who've boned up on their skills by writing thesis-style emails (mostly to us, it seems) on their DC keyboards will find it difficult to flaunt the blazingly fast skills necessary for taking down multiple enemies—a task which generally requires the lightning-speed entry of words like "Zimbabwe" or phrases like "Everyone pledge allegiance to a corn-dog pagan god." (Okay, so we made that last one up, but it's comparable to what you'll find in the game.)

If you have a keyboard and

what never runs out of ammo? With the revamped mini-gun antics of *House of the Dead 2*, this may just be your ticket to enjoying one of the best zombie rides on DC. *Typing of the Dead* is the ultimate rickie game to master. And no, we're not joking. FRANCESCA REYES

## Only Typing can Save Your Life

Can typing really save your life? Read our three-pronged argument and judge for yourself.

**Reason #1.** Deadlines on ODCM. The faster you type, the less you are in danger of being decapitated by Dina's flying scissor kick.

**Reason #2.** Money. Face it—unless you're some genius supreme, you're gonna need to have some typing skills to earn any real middle management cash in this lifetime. And although middle management can be seen as the working equivalent of zombification, at least...well...damn. There really isn't any justification for middle management.

**Reason #3.** If you've ever hacked into NORAD, you know it's true that fast typing can save your life and those of millions of innocent humans. Remember War Games?



## The Nightmare Dreamcast

FOR BEGA NEW SILENT BOMB SURVIVAL  
EXCITATION AND DEAN PLAYERS 1  
PROMO KICKBACK ONLINE RELEASE JAN

## PLUSES [+]

The next best thing to a lightgun shooter...without the lightgun or the shooter

## MINUSES [-]

Um, this isn't an established genre?

## BOTTOM LINE [-]

Clearly, Segi is committed to bringing all flavors of DC-worthiness Stateside. Call us strange, but we're stoked

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 Dreamcast™

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**XICAT**  
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INTERACTIVE





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to settle the score and eliminate all conflict between the two parties. Many of the world's most famous warriors have joined and the public is going mad with anticipation. Join over 25 brawlers from Capcom's legendary Street Fighter and SNK's world-renowned King of Fighters series\* as they fight for universal domination.

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 **Dreamcast**

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Note to Shaq: Eat it.



# NBA 2K1

## Throw one down

**L**ast November, Visual Concepts released *NBA 2K* to a fairly muted response. It was arguably the best basketball game ever developed, yet under the Godzilla-sized shadow of VC's own *NFL 2K*, the title was somewhat overlooked. Complaints were lodged against its unnecessary animation sequences (which slowed the pace of the game), some all-too-ineffective dribble moves, and frequent play-stopping collisions on dribble drives...essentially, there were all kinds of game-play elements that simply lacked the polish and finesse of a truly A-plus title.

Fortunately, this year's sequel has addressed most

of these gripes very much like John Starks addressed Michael Jordan and Horace Grant in the '93 playoffs: "Sorry 'bout kicking your ass, there. Did it hurt, sucka?"

**Gameplay is in many ways** similar to that of last year's version, with the analog stick and button combinations remaining essentially unchanged. What makes a huge difference, however, is the number of refinements that VC has made to its old, established formula—the developer has managed to tune some basic features quite nicely, and, in doing so, has made the game significantly more playable. Among the offensive



Ewing with the fadeaway 15-footer. You can't stop him. You can only hope to contain him.



The Human Highlight Film returns (top). There are plenty of moments in *NBA 2K11* where you'll be watching a replay with your mouth agape, saying something along the lines of, "Ohmygod. This rules."

improvements is the greatly improved post-up game: Blocking your opponent down with your back to the basket is now a far more accessible option, and the war in the paint is now significantly more realistic. Players make use of their bodies to effectively establish position, and now have several options available to them from the post position. The move to a quick turnaround jumpshot is both simple and efficient, and it actually makes the post-up game a viable option for players who choose this form of attack.

As opposed to *NBA 2K*, crossovers and spin moves are now extremely effective. Rather than simply providing a visual representation of the move, they actually serve to get you



### Take it outside!

ONE OF THE MOST entertaining options created especially for *NBA 2K's* sequel is the new Street mode. Taking a page from real life, this feature enables you to hold court on various famous (or notorious) public parks and inner-city blackpots.

For the record, Evan would like to state his opinion—in print—on the Knicks' management line single-handedly destroyed one of the hardest-working, over-achieving and downright coolest basketball teams of all time: The aging back Ewing, Oakley and Stacks, ditch Glen Rice and Travis Knight, and into the big fella's championship. Foote.

around your defender in convincingly realistic fashion. Players make much better cuts without the ball, and taking jumpers with a man up in your grill is an altogether bad idea. Expect a nasty rejection letter, delivered promptly via airmail. Oh—and wait until you see the swat blocks...

This year, players can also more effectively control the tempo of the game. While the emphasis is still on speed, quick hits and transition offense, players can slow the action down if they want—and the on-point pressing means that getting into a half-court set and hitting the open man for a jumper is a very feasible proposition.

Making that jumpshot,

# Welcome to ES ZONE

## ODCM's Electoral Review College

If there's one thing that the review staff at ODCM isn't, it's unfair. This ain't no stinkin' monarchy, bub. Instead, it's a finely crafted system with loads of checks and balances. So, in essence, everything from Evan's crazy street lingo to Greg Orlando's obsession with Boba Fett gets an equal chance to reach the public. And we hand-count, too. God bless America.



**GREG ORLANDO**  
Reviewed: Resident Evil 5, Super Runabout

What can we say about Greg that we haven't already posted in every single past issue of ODCM? Well, we could say that he's the original "Bad Mama Jamma", but that would be a lie. Instead, let's just settle for the fact that he's a man who loves zombies. Not that kind of love, but the love between a mother and son. Gaaa.



**CHRIS CHARLA**  
Reviewed: Hoyle's Casino, Ms. PacMan Maze Madness

In our story Chris was indeed gaming and all things thereof, thus this issue's review of *Hoyle's Casino* and *Ms. PacMan Maze Madness*. But the real deal is that he actually loves the "80s quarter-beat journey even more. We can't say that we're not scared by his knowledge, but hey—at least they have a videogame, right?



**GARRETT KENYON**  
Reviewed: Spike Ops II: Omega Squad, KISS Psycho Circus

Former *PQOL* editor, Garrett Kenyon, would like to state for the record that he's not into games simply for the gore or the shooting. He actually prefers realistic simulations that feature unknowns and unknowns, when he's not trading stickers with his pals. He especially likes the purty stickers of Sanrio characters.



**DR. JAMES PRESTON**  
Reviewed: Surf Rocket Racer, BANG! Gunship Elite

You may remember James from such ODCM reviews as *Meteoric Street Racer* and *The Ring Terror's Rumble*, but this issue, we challenged him further by forcing him into his semi-silly for a little jutsu action in *Dave's Surf Rocket Racer*. He may not see too much about the game, but he loves outlaws.



**EVAN SHAMOON**  
Reviewed: NBA 2K11, Ready 2 Rumble Round 2

Little known fact: ODCM's own Evan Shamoon is one of the most notorious trash-talkers in the business, which made him a perfect choice for reviewing *NBA 2K11* and *Ready 2 Rumble 2*. He's also a big Patrick Ewing fan, and he could like a little guy when Ewing was traded to the Sonics.

## Our Scoring System

No, pal, not that kind of scoring system. If it were, we sure wouldn't give it away for free—we'd be selling it in the back of Mucky for \$29.99. And Evan would have a date this weekend.

We score games on a scale of 1 to 10. When we believe a game is just average, we give it 5 out of 10. If its appeal is aimed directly at fans of either its genre or its series but is not something that will be enjoyed by everyone, it gets 6 out of 10. And we've even added a spiffy new scoring system for graphics, sound, control and gameplay!

Peripherals are another story. Since it doesn't make much sense to score a VMU or an extension cord on a 1-10 scale, we've created an incredibly clever and cute smiley-face score system. We hope you'll find it self-explanatory.

### Dream Game Award\*

With Dreamcast's promising software lineup, we won't be hard-pressed to pick a game every issue that goes above and beyond the call of greatness. For this singular type of game, we've concocted our special award: the Dream Game Award. The title that is so truly deserving is guaranteed to be good, no matter who you are or what type of games you like to play. An essential purchase!

\*Small print somewhere in this mag secures your legal agreement to buy all Dream Game Award titles immediately.

### 10 Instant classic

9 phenomenal

8 excellent

7 good

6 for fans

5 average

4 mediocre

3 flawed

2 its mom loves it

1 coaster





Gervin gets his severe-in. Aside from a little finger-roll, the Iceman can also throw down poster-inducing facials such as this one. We want to know what's up with gorilla-man down there in the front row.



As of this writing, the 76ers are 8-0. This is especially impressive considering the fact that just a few years ago, the 76ers had a total of nine wins over the course of an entire 82-game season. Nothing a little shot of superstardom (read: Iverson) can't fix.



## NETWORK PLAY

NBA 2K1'S NETWORK INTERFACE is more polished than that of its NFL counterpart. Players can set several filters, including the opponent's rate filter, keyboard filter and game mode filter (street, exhibition, or both) to find the most suitable online matchups. The game also has ten chat macros, which can be assigned to keyboard buttons for quick trash-talking during play.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the action itself, VC's b-ball game doesn't have quite the flow that NFL 2K1 accomplished with its online play. The primary reason for this—aside from the ever-present lag issue—is the fact that basketball is much more of a twitch sport than football (well, at least when you're using your thumbs and a control pad to play it). Because of the relatively small margin for error—in either making a defensive play or hitting a jumpshot—things can get a bit touchy. So when there's lag, unless you anticipate where your opponent is going at the precise moment that he attempts to go there, you can consider yourself toasted. Same goes for jumpers: the millisecond delay changes the moment of release from the apex of your jump to a split-second before or after.

But in the end, the quality of your online experience depends on your connection (and your opponent's connection as well). When we played, there were times when things went swimmingly—while at other times, the jerky action made us want to fling the controller away.

however, is more difficult. Like last year's game, NBA 2K1 demands that players release the shoot button precisely at the apex of their jump, or else risk taking a trip to Brick City. While it is reasonable to concede that developers should be able to count on players having at least some skill at hitting a jump shot, we were surprised at the number of reliable shooters who missed open jumpers.

NBA 2K1 retains its Season, Franchise, Exhibition, Tourney, Practice and Quick Start modes, and adds Street and Network options to the fray as well. While it might seem merely tacked-on, the Street mode is a spectacularly entertaining addition. Gamers get to ball on real-life backlots like The Cage in NYC and Franklin Park in Chicago, and each of the street courts is depicted in near photo-realistic detail. Players compete in a variety

of different matchup options, from NBA Jam-style up-tempo two-on-two contests to more traditional, NBA-style five-on-five games. This mode captures the essence of street hoops very well, with passing cars and trash-talking providing the ambient noise.

Still, for as long as there have been around, basketball games have lagged several steps behind the quality of their gridiron counterparts—and sadly, this one is no different. While it remains the best console basketball game on the market (by a landslide), NBA 2K1 frustrates for several reasons. Many of the AI routines are simply too strict; gameplay is hampered by an inordinate number of steals; and player collision boxes are bigger than they should be. This often leads to a fair amount of awkward bumping and shoving when you attempt to bring the ball into the paint, and makes

defense more of a hit-and-miss affair than the straight-up sort of kill-by-skill that it should be.

Far from being just a statistical update, yet not quite perfect, NBA2K1 is clearly the best console b-ball game ever made: it's an absolute must-play for sports fans. EVAN SHAMMOON

**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: VISUAL CONCEPTS  
SYSTEM: 15 PLAYERS' 1 RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW  
GENRE: SPORTS ONLINE YES

**GRAPHICS 9**  
Amazing animation, great player models

**SOUND 8**  
Quality hoops sounds, good commentary

**CONTROL 8**  
Not monetary issues, but overall very good

**GAMEPLAY 9**  
It's not perfect, but this is the best b-ball game

**Score: 9**



# Wanna play?



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"Right! Left! Right! Illegally-sharpened hairdo stab!"



Afro Thunder goes head-to-head (well, more like head-to-toe) with Shaq Diesel. True Story: Midway staged an event in Las Vegas, in which the real Afro and Shaq squared off in the ring to play a match of Round 2 on the big screen.



# Ready2Rumble: Round 2

Don't call it a comeback. Midway smacks us upside the head once again

**S**ubtlety comes in many forms. We here at **ODCM** can safely say, however, that Midway's *Ready2Rumble* series is not one of these forms. Round 2 brings back all of the ridiculously over-the-top antics that made the first game such a gem, and adds to it a host of improvements—mostly in the form of more/more/more. And while the game certainly won't give anyone who didn't care for the original title anything to write home about, the sequel proves to be a worthy successor. It's a damn good shot of mindless entertainment.

**True to form, Round 2** diligently continues Midway's legacy of pick-up-and-play gaming, eliciting such hard-hitting, hyphenated descriptions as "smash-mouth" and "In-your-

face" from game journalists nationwide (yours truly included, apparently). This is straight-up twitch-gaming for the masses—Round 2 effectively translates the sweet science into the sweet violence, while holding on (albeit loosely) to all of the fundamental rules and principles of the sport. It may be all hopped up on gofballs, but it's still boxing. So, please: no kicking.

**When it was first displayed** to the public in the months leading up to Dreamcast's launch, the original *Ready2Rumble* blew gamers away with its shiny, polished visuals and wonderfully engaging personality. Characters came to life (by beating one another to a pulp: ain't it grand?), and imbued the

game with a look that was all its own—and distinctly next-generation. Punches landed with an immensely satisfying quotient of 'thwap', and the skin on opponents' faces wibbled and bruised accordingly. Heads snapped realistically in whatever direction they were

punched, and each round's progress was recorded in cuts, bruises and sundry bodily redecoration. Of course, while all of this made for an enjoyable slugfest, the depth of play wasn't far removed from an exceptionally good match of Rock 'Em-Sock 'Em Robots.

**Midway's attempt to address** this problem comes in the form of much-improved character AI, more advanced moves and a slightly deeper fighting model. Beating up on the computer is far more of a challenge than it was last year, requiring a somewhat deeper mastery of the game's controls—buttton mashing will simply not put your opponent down for the count, no matter how many punches per minute your fists of steel can throw.

Instead, players will have to come to grips with multiple-button attacks and combinations, and get good and agile at using the dodge button. It takes more than a little bit of the old rope-a-dope to get through this one (that's right, the computer will now not only attempt to back you into a corner, but will

## New Kids on the Knock Your Block Off

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 introduces some not-so-all-too-familiar folks:





Michael Jackson certainly has a big enough target to hit in Big Mama Tia. What's cool (from a certain point of view—like, the one that doesn't make your toes curl up in horror) is that when it's played on a VGA monitor, Round 2's level of detail allows you to see the individual stretch-marks on Mama's body. The game has a shiny, polished look that reminds us a lot of *Rocky IV*.



David Lee Roth would kill for these purple ankle-warmers...and so would Dina. The level of detail in Round 2's costumes and environments is impressive; check out the scuff marks on this floor, for instance.



aggressively attempt to fight it's way out of whatever corner you've backed it into).

In terms of bulk, *Round 2* has signed several new boxers to its list, the most recognizable of whom are King of Pop Michael Jackson and fab movie star Shaquille O'Neal. Eleven of the game's original boxers make a return—all with new costumes—and another five newcomers round out the pugilistic lot. Each of these cats have been equipped with a new menu of taunt and victory animations, as well—the quality of which is fairly disappointing. Midway must've hired some Rialto-popping LA producer-type guy to supply the 'attitude'; and the resulting barrage of '90s-chic, over-the-top ethnic stereotyping is stale from the get-go—particularly since most of these utterances weren't even funny.

Graphically, the game has seen only marginal upgrades: textures seem cleaner, character animation has been smoothed out a bit and little touches like bouncing afros have been added to embellish the visuals. And several new camera angles—notably the Telephoto lens—give these graphics a nice new sheen, as well.

The poorly-recorded voices and a lack of any in-game music don't especially help matters, however—and neither do the obtrusively long load-times between matches. It's never wise to slow the pace of a game that is based almost entirely upon its frantic, non-stop pacing.

This *Round* does come out swinging with additional modes, including *Tournament* (which can accommodate up to eight players) and *Team Battle*, in which you join one other person

to battle up to eight opposing boxers in a last-man-standing series of bouts.

Also worth noting is the game's new-and-improved training mode, which includes a fully 3D trainer and sparring practice against a passive AI opponent. Mini-games include stair-climbing, jump rope, aerobics, weightlifting, sway bag, heavy bag and speed bag. These are mildly entertaining diversions, in a *Space Channel-5* without-the-style kinda way, and they're necessary steps in your journey to the championship mode. The only bad thing was that it kept reminding us to get out and get busy with some real-life exercise instead of sitting at our computers. Which we clearly didn't do. Oh, well.

As in *Round 1*, the key to winning is timing: if you're not on your game and picking your

spots, you'll be kissing canvas faster than you can say "Floats like a butterfly, stings like a bee." The original game's *Rumble* punch has returned, and can now be built up three times over—with each build, of course, being more powerful than the last. If you manage to build up your *Rumble* meter all the way, you can stage massive comebacks in even the most dire of circumstances. This feature, along with the fact that taunting can now build up your *Rumble* meter as well, adds a great deal more depth to the game.

Perhaps the most disappointing thing about *Ready2Rumble: Round 2* is its lack of online multiplayer capacity. With a game like this—after Midway has had a full year to figure out how to implement online support—this feature should have been a no-brainer. Frankly, we think

Midway should have gone the extra mile; we would have enjoyed beating our overseas amigos to a pulp. Still, there's satisfaction to be had, here—for both first-time players and *Ready 2 Rumble* vets alike.

EVAN SHAMON

**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY DEVELOPER: MIDWAY  
 HOW TO BUY: BUY IT IN STORES OR ONLINE  
 NO RELEASE DATE OUT NOW

**GRAPHICS 9**  
 What was already very pretty's been improved

**Sound 6**  
 Some very muted voice samples. No music

**CONTROL 8**  
 Simple but effective—gets the job done

**GAMEPLAY 7**  
 You've played deeper games. But this is FUN

**Score: 7**



## KNOW WHEN TO RUN

IT'S A SHAME THAT one of the best elements in Hoyle—on paper—turns out, in practice, to be its biggest problem. Since the 'hell' of gambling has as much to do with the players as the play, the addition of NPCs should have upped the fun ante. Instead, it slows the program down so much that even Kenny Rogers wouldn't be able to run (or walk quickly) away.



This game offers Vegas-style gambling, sans loan sharks and singed hair. Which is great, but we do miss those tigers.



# Hoyle Casino

Worth a gamble? [Snickering, snickering.] Don't bother putting on your poker face

**U**here's a lot to like in Hoyle Casino. Unfortunately, there's also a lot to dislike, and it's no sure thing that you'll be able to slog through the disliked parts to get to the good stuff.

First, we'd like to say we don't have anything against Dreamcast games made with the Windows CE operating system—but we do. Why? Hoyle is a perfect example: loading times are long, and the game periodically pauses for a few seconds to load what seems like one or two frames of animation.

But let's go back to the good stuff for a minute. This is an exhaustive casino simulation, with blackjack, craps, pai

gow poker, regular poker (including stud, draw and hold 'em), video poker, roulette, and about a million different slot machines.

**Each of the modes is very well done.** There are enough options to configure any of the table games to any rules used at any casino we've ever been to, and there's extensive stat-tracking and even a small tutorial for each game. The game supports up to four players, but if you're playing alone it'll add in NPCs for a real casino feel. Each character has a cartoonish look, a distinctive personality/betting style and a small, unique library of animations and speech.

Unfortunately, this is where the problems start. We liked the idea of the characters—but whenever they're turned on, the program is so damn slow it's almost unplayable. Every hand in blackjack, it seemed, featured at least one major disc-accessing pause. This was just infuriating: it destroyed the very rhythm that makes gambling so fun. To counter this effect, you could turn off all of the characters and animation to speed things up, but then it wasn't much better than playing any of the myriad of free casino games you can find online. The lack of online play was also sorely felt. If it'd been able to play online, things would have

been so much better—but that's the case with just about every new game these days, it seems.

**We liked the stat-tracking** and we liked the card-counting help in blackjack. The game was fun to play with friends, and it was also a good place to try out some strategies before ODCM's monthly trip to Reno on the Lucky Tours bus with our petty cash fund.

So, underlying gambling algorithms and variety of games: great. Overlying interface and character graphics and animation: rubbish. If you're willing to tolerate the slowness and jerkiness of the graphics, this game may well

be worth your \$40. But we wouldn't bet on it. CHRIS CHARLA

**Dreamcast**

HOYLE CASINO  
PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: SEGA  
GENE COOPER, INC. 15 PLAYERS 1-4 ONLINE MSRP: \$40

**GRAPHICS 2**  
Pretty good variety in player comments

**SOUND 6**  
Pretty good variety in player comments

**CONTROL 5**  
Why does it take so long when I have a 20?

**GAMEPLAY 6**  
Deep down it's good, but getting there is too hard

**Score: 5**



f e a t u r e s

t r i c k s

t i p s



s c o o p s

p r e v i e w s

r e v i e w s

s t r a t e g i e s



**Imagine Games Group**

consider it covered

PlayStation 2, Dreamcast, Nintendo, and PC, Imagine Games magazines have it all!



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Check out these Egyptian-themed ghosts—touches like this abound. See those cliffs (below)? Don't worry, you can't fall off them; you are basically stuck in the maze, so platform jumping never really enters the play. If your friend is not down with Dreamcast after you've shown her Uta and Simba, this may do the trick.



## Elite 21 Series

NEW



### From eating dots to printing dots...

ALTHOUGH SHE'S BEEN a staple mascot for years, the DIC iteration of Ms. Pac-Man is actually Namco's first go-round with the title. The original Ms. Pac-Man was a conversion kit for Pac-Man machines made by a company called GCC Technologies and marketed by Bally-Midway, distributor of Pac-Man in America. GCC, which was started by a couple of MIT undergrads, it's still around, by the way—it now manufactures and sells laser printers for Macs and PCs. The printers aren't as fun as Ms. Pac-Man, but they're really nice machines (Chris's dad has one; he loves it). Check 'em out at [www.gccstech.com](http://www.gccstech.com).



# Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

The Material Pac is back!

**S**ometimes a game so strongly defines a genre that it's impossible to imagine the genre without it. *Tony Hawk* and skating games. *Street Fighter* and brawlers. *Pac-Man* and mazes.

So it's appropriate that nearly 20 years after she entered the scene, Namco's Ms. Pac-Man sticks to her roots. This is maze game, boys and girls. Eat the dots. Avoid the ghosts. Eat the power pellets. Now eat the ghosts.

Of course, Namco has made some changes to bring Ms. Pac-Man into the 21st century. The game is now in 3D, and rather than levels, you have stages and worlds a la Sonic (actually, the stage structure—and in fact the entire game structure—bears a striking resemblance to the PlayStation

game *Ape Escape*), with each of the stages in a world sharing a similar graphical flavor.

**As explained in the very nice, traditionally animated intro and cut-scenes,** Ms. Pac-Man is sent into these different worlds and times via a special machine created by Professor Pac. Why? If you've played a game before, you won't be surprised to hear that it's to recover the gems of virtue, which have been scattered throughout time and space by the ghosts—and if they (the gems) aren't recovered, they threaten to destroy PacLand.

Although the levels themselves are maze-based, these aren't the mazes you'd expect to see in Ms. Pac-Man. Like we said, they're in 3D—but they also scroll and feature several new items, including moveable

walls, jump pads, warp zones and more. Completing each maze gets you a star, but to fully beat the game, you'll need to do more than that—you have to beat each level under a certain time and get all the dots, etc. Or



### Mo' GCC Facts

GCC (see boxout above) was also responsible for the creation of the Atari 7800 system, and almost half the games Atari released for the 5200. And *Freddy Night-Dancer*. They're good.

course, once you leave a stage you can always return to try to complete the challenges later.

**Graphically, everything** is sharp and high-res, but polygon counts (and everything else) seems identical to the Play Station version. It's a pretty simple looking game, so that's not a bad thing. But we would have liked to have seen some Dreamcast flair—lighting effects, better sound—something to distinguish it.

As for the gameplay, it's fun and incredibly easy to get into (making this ideal for playing with kids or your non-gaming-playing significant-other), but the maze gameplay does start to get a little stale after a few hours. Luckily, cut-scenes are good enough that you'll want to keep going to see them. But

don't be surprised if this game ends up shelved long before you've earned every star. After all, it isn't like you haven't played this game before...

CHRIS CHARLA

**Dreamcast**

PUB. NAME:1 REV. NAME:0 MENUS: NA: CHASE  
 GEN: US PLAT:1 ONLINE: YEAH BONE: E  
 PRICE: \$49.99

**GRAPHICS 7**  
 Cute, simple, but not beyond the PSX version.  
 [Bar chart: 7/10]

**SOUND 6**  
 Nice, but again, nothing amazing aurally.  
 [Bar chart: 6/10]

**CONTROL 8**  
 Amazing, amazing (this is pure digital, baby).  
 [Bar chart: 8/10]

**GAMEPLAY 7**  
 Only to get into, but it can get a little thingy.  
 [Bar chart: 7/10]

**Score: 7**





The crosshairs give you a good view, but there's no way to zoom and the accuracy is extremely iffy. The end result is one frustrated sniper who looks a lot like you.



This night-vision scope lets you attack at night. The bummer of this game is that almost every piece is here; it just fails to add up to more than the sum of its parts (especially considering the online part, which isn't there at all). Still, if you're into tactical combat, it's probably worth a rent to see if you got into it more than we did.



## SpecOps II: Omega Squad

A PC hit and a DC miss—well, actually, a near miss. It kinda grazed us...

**I**t's no surprise that Ripcord virtually snuck Spec Ops II Omega Squad out the door with little fanfare. With tons of real-world missions and weapons, input from the US Army's first Special Forces team and a well-established product line (Spec Ops I, Spec Ops II, and a Spec Ops add-on pack, all for PC behind it), Omega Squad should be an immediate hit.

Unfortunately, though, it seems that the DC version has taken a back seat to the PC version when it comes to quality. It isn't the graphics—they hold up in competition against visuals in any other DC shooters. And it isn't the gameplay—it's quite satisfying, with a huge number of missions incorporating different objectives to be completed (in fact, we would go so far as to

say that the depth and skill required to master a game like Spec Ops II makes it an entertaining strategy romp). So what's there to complain about? What the game doesn't have.

**First off, a multiplayer mode is** conspicuously absent from the game. Secondly, there is neither hide nor hair of even the remotest semblance of any online support to be found. It may be nitpicky to complain about

such things, but Spec Ops II is hitting store shelves just as SegaNet takes over the DC gaming world (and there's already an online community built around the PC version), and it's a pretty big thing to leave out. Okay, it's a REALLY big thing to leave out.

Another thing absent from play is diagonal strafing—a feature that enables players to push forward and strafe at the same time. In a diagonal motion, thus helping them dodge bullets and

negotiate terrain. This omission makes navigating the landscape difficult when trying to elude sharpshootin' enemies. Also, your crosshairs reticle is shamefully inaccurate. It's frustrating to fire off what should be an instant lobotomy shot, only to watch your bullet zing harmlessly over your enemy's shoulder. And the sniper scope doesn't allow players to zoom in and out—you've only got the option of one real close-up view.

Even with these flaws, Omega Squad would've been passable only a mere three months ago. But with some awesome tactical military games already available and several stellar new shooters due for release any day now, Omega Squad simply doesn't shine brightly enough to dazzle.

GARRETT KENYON

See this? You should be impressed. Killing people from long range via the scope is actually wickedly difficult.

### View to a Kill

One interesting feature of Spec Ops II Omega Squad is the Drop Camera option, which enables players to drop a camera into a certain spot and to watch the action from that point of view. While it is somewhat difficult to control your character in this mode, it definitely makes for some interesting gameplay moments. Besides that, the game also allows you to play from either first- or third-person points of view.

### Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: RIPCORD DEVELOPER: RIPCORD  
PLAYERS: SINGLE (2-4) MULTI: 4  
PRICE: \$49.99 (US) \$59.99 (CAN/UK)  
RATED: 17 ONLINE: NO ESRB: B PRICE: \$49.99

**GRAPHICS 6**  
The game's graphics are outstanding, the overall presentation is fairly bland.

**SOUND 5**  
Standard military shooter fare.

**CONTROL 4**  
Not being able to sidestep is perhaps the game's biggest deficiency.

**GAMEPLAY 6**  
While it's a fun game to play, there's too much left out for a higher score.

**Score: 5**



We've experienced the damage that occurs in this game—in real life. And we said to ourselves, as we waited for the cop to finish writing up his report that night: Wow—this tactical Videogames are way better than life.

TIME LIMIT  
**177**



TIME **02:02:33**  
AMOUNT **\$376,400**

# Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition

We left our hearts (and our hubcaps and our fenders) in San Francisco

**K**iss those pesky traffic rules goodbye. *Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition* invites players to engage in such destructive and overly fun activities as smashing into stuff, flipping things up, performing dazzling *Dukes of Hazard*-esque jumps and running down innocent pedestrians. It is, in short, a true-to-life portrayal of everyday automotive life in San Francisco.

The game offers mission-based play wherein Dreamcast drivers can choose two different occupations (cops or couriers) and gain valuable dollars by wreaking havoc on anything and everything. Basically, you can think of *Super Runabout* as

Crazy Taxi's less insane cousin, *Mildly Wacky Taxi*.

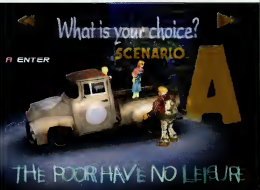
*Super Runabout* does an excellent job of sustaining a goofy tone, asking players to derail a runaway cable car, collecting bombs and plowing through the city collecting fixings for a hot rod. Everything in this decently rendered world is fodder for destruction; collisions are portrayed in the most exaggerated way possible, with cars hurtling in all directions, shattered glass spraying wildly, radiator steam gushing into the sky and hoods and fenders buckling like the French in World War II.

Even a lowly motor scooter can be used to smash up a great big bus and the effect remains both wonderfully comic and oddly endearing.

There are approximately 25-plus cars to unlock, including a tank, a street sweeper, a bus, a limousine, and—we are not making this up—a piggy. An ever-imposing time limit ensures a manic pace for every mission, and the well-designed streets (modeled authentically on the real McCoy) contain all kinds of shortcuts, just waiting to be discovered. Remarkably, this game succeeds on many levels, and certainly despite its

failings. Interplay brought it over from Japan after toiling mightily to fix a small plague of problems, but they weren't totally successful. Some of the vehicles still handle sloppily, and even a neat garage option, which enables fine-tuning of individual car parts, does little to rectify the situation.

Add in some egregious clipping and collision problems that manifest every time you hit a pole (moving objects are initially stopped by such an obstacle and then allowed to pass right through it), and you'd expect disaster: but none of these pot-holes is quite deep enough to cause a total wreck. It's more like a lovely mess. GREG ORLANDO



## You Make the Call

### A THE POOR HAVE NO LEISURE!

THIS CRYPTIC PHRASE, which appears onscreen during the courier scenario of *Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition*, troubles us. It brings to mind words like "socioscientific" and "disenfranchised," which have been gathering dust in the back of our mental closets since college. Does this text imply that po' folks don't "get" leisure, or that they simply can't afford it? Does it insinuate that the elegant pleasures of sitting on a veranda while maidservants prepare mint juleps and waitresses sandwiches would simply be wasted on the poor? Is it because the word "regatta" doesn't appear on spelling lists in most public schools? Or maybe we just need to take a nap.

### B BAD NEWS HAS WINGS!

ANOTHER PITHY BOB MOT: "Bad news has wings" (screen not shown 'cause it looks just like the one above, only with the words "Bad news has wings"), introduces the game's police scenario. News (of the bad) life has thusly been given the characteristics of a bird—which could suggest, by logical extension, that it can, in fact, defy gravity and fly south for the winter. Or that it can beg for a cracker—as in, "Bad news wants a cracker"—or mate for life like a parrot if it happens to meet a tidbit of good news that it likes...two opposites sticking together like male and female flies of Velcro...



**Dreamcast**

FUR FUGS: DUE TO CLIMATE, ENTERTAINMENT GENRE  
GAMES: GREEN NEWS PLAYS: ONLINE: YES  
PERFECT: GREEN WHEELS: YES: PRICE: \$39.99

**GRAPHICS 7**

Think a madder version of Crazy Taxi's graphics

**SOUND 6**

The wonderful sound of a car crashing into everything

**CONTROL 5**

Damn those slippery and spastic cars!

**GAMEPLAY 7**

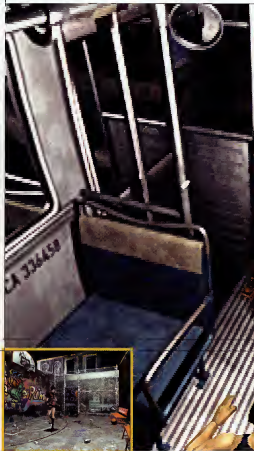
Fun enough over all, the game's problems

**Score: 7**



## IN YOUR HEAD, IN YOUR HEAD, ZOMBIE ZOMBIE ...

BACK IN THE 1960s, all you needed for rock stardom was to claim British citizenship, rockin' rollers The Zombies, who neither rocked nor rolled with notable aplomb, managed to carve out a brief piece of fame with a series of quirky but 'seminal' songs. They're indirectly responsible, it's said, for phenomena like The Doors, The Kinks, and a whole series of UK passports. A few hits like "She's Not There" and "Time of the Season" weren't enough to keep the Zombies alive, and after five years, they called it a day: just as their final album (which went platinum) *Odessey and Oracle* was about to be released. In an odd twist, CBS records attempted to resurrect the dead Zombies, but the boys in the band demurred...



"Dear Abby: Ever have one of those days when you feel like everyone is just like, totally falling to pieces and bawling all of their problems out on you? Or like people and things are out to get you all the time? I mean, I keep telling myself I'm just being paranoid, and that I probably seem just as like, defensive and angry to them as they do to me...and I think, Okay, maybe if I'm nice to them, they'll be nice to me. And then they try to kill me again. Is it me? Why can't we all just get along? —A Girl in Trouble"



# Resident Evil 2

Swimming gorgeously in the dead pool... Come on in, the water's fine

**A**h, zombies. Their shambling, flesh-eating antics provide endless fodder for some of Dreamcast's finest titles. Now, Capcom is adding what might be its greatest non-DC exclusive epic to the undead mix: *Resident Evil 2* joins the party on Dreamcast.

A 3D, third-person survival horror masterpiece, RE2 puts heroine Claire Redfield and newbie cop Leon Kennedy into a warzone, where the Ungrateful Dead are on tour and twining things up. Claire and Leon star in separate but interconnected adventures, which sprawl (and bleed) over two GD-ROMs.

The game itself remains unchanged from its PC, Play

Station, and Nintendo 64 iterations in terms of plot and pacing, but updated graphics add extra punch: characters and background seem even more endlessly ominous, not to mention sharper and crisper.

**Few games have ever come** close to capturing *Evil 2*'s oppressive mood, decidedly creepy storyline and horrific

enemies. The Raccoon City Police Department headquarters where most of the adventure plays out is more tomb than hall of justice; every dull slap of shoe against tile, every darkened corner and every moaning member of the Recently Exhumed Club helps to build a monument to delicious terror. The game seems to take perverse pleasure in administering brief shocks

(i.e., greedy, tentacled hands shooting out of a hole in the wall and grabbing at the hero, or a tantalizing glimpse of something scurrying across a window pane and quickly disappearing into the muck) to churn the adrenaline at random intervals.

These scary elements, designed to elicit brute reaction, are mixed with moderately difficult puzzles that'll stir your intellect. It's a heady combination—and a clunky control system, which can often turn walking in a straight line into a Herculean task, was never a distraction big enough to pull us out of the game. In fact, nothing could stop this zombie hell from being...well, heavenly.

GREG ORLANDO

## BUILD A BETTER ZOMBIE ...

ACCORDING TO WEBSITE The Webtender ([www.web.tender.com](http://www.web.tender.com)), a fussy zombie can be conjured from the following ingredients: Light rum, Creme de menthe, Sweet and sour, Triple sec, Orange juice and 151 proof rum. Were we a less responsible publication, we would recommend that you shake all of the ingredients with some ice and strain the result into a Collins glass over ice cubes. Then, we if we weren't so darn merely upstanding, we might suggest that you float the rum on top and serve this undead concoction with a cherry. But we won't.

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHED BY CAPCOM DEVELOPED BY CAPCOM  
THE TIME OF THE DEAD: ADVANCEMENT  
RE2 ONLINE: NO BATTLE PAGE: \$16.99

**GRAPHICS 8**  
They seem not the sharper, clearer PC version

**SOUND 7**  
Ambient, diaphanous sounds help sustain opaqueness

**CONTROL 5**  
Players must push a button to walk down stairs

**GAMEPLAY 8**  
Evil is very, very good...

**Score: 8**



"Why are there so many songs about rainbows?" "Well, Kermit, we could tell you but then we'd have to kill you."



## Quick like a bunny

To reach the few shortcuts in SSR, try the bunny hop. Simply hold down the R trigger for acceleration, then release the trigger, snap down on the analog stick and hit the trigger again for a quick jump. Do it with your eyes shut if someone's around to wake you up if you doze off.



# Surf Rocket Racer

Better hope a sofa cushion can be used as a flotation device...

It's never a good sign when a new Dreamcast game can't even live up to the standards of a

launch title. *Surf Rocket Racer*, like *Hydro Thunder*, is an arcade-style speed-fest across a watery landscape.

But unlike *Hydro Thunder*, it has rather mediocre graphics, few interesting shortcuts and even fewer cool unlockable

extras. With only a handful of tricks, characters and maps to explore, this one is soggier than the last frosted flake in the bowl.

only serve to remind players of just how boring the rest of the game is.

Visually, *SSR* underwhelms with bland textures and flat environments. The waves look nice, but from a physics standpoint, the interaction between surf rockets and water doesn't float. The wake behind rockets is a simple texture that doesn't move or reshape, succeeding only in looking utterly artificial. And while the bright skies, clear water and hidden caves of the Bahamas stage are quite pretty, settings in New York, Rome and the Amazon are just pretty darn dull.

Unfortunately, things aren't spiced up by the routine game-

Which isn't to say that there aren't a few sparks of imagination in *Surf Rocket Racer*—there just aren't enough to start a fire of frenetic fun. There are only seven basic maps, with five of them lightly modified to create 13 slightly different courses. However, only two tracks have any visual flair. The Niagara Falls level sends racers over (you'll never guess) the Niagara Falls; the final phantom ship level has some nice scary moments. But unfortunately, the good bits

## DROWNING BY NUMBERS



Although there have been stories of daredevils going over the Niagara Falls in a barrel, the real challenge has been crossing the great cascade by tightrope. Since the early 1820s, more than a dozen men have walked across the falls on a single line—and one guy, William Hunt, even did it blindfolded with baskets (baskets? Was he sponsored by Pier 1 Imports?) on his feet. FACT: while plummeting down the 300-foot Falls is a showy way to drown, one can do it just as effectively in as little as six inches of water—many people are victims of their own bathtubs. If, however, the lethal tubwater is cold, one can be revived with few ill effects up to an hour after unconsciousness, as long as someone is there to fish you out. Always use the buddy system, kids.



POSITION

1 / 6

TIME 36

TOTAL TIME

1' 24" 600

LAP TIME

1:1' 24" 633

2:-' 00" 000

+ 0.5 SECONDS!

BEST LAP

1' 20" 933



### What the Duck?

There are a few interesting goodies in *Surf Rocket Racers*, one of which is the ability to unlock some secret characters. Complete the game's many trick and hazard modes, and you'll get to race against some seriously ducked-up competition. Win the championship, and you'll unlock the yellow racer of them all!



play. You'll choose between six different racers, each with slightly different speed, acceleration and handling stats. You can't create your own character, nor can you improve the stats of the six initial characters by winning races. And once you become good enough to handle the "expert" drivers, there is little reason to bother with the beginners ever again. But who needs replay value?

**The limited selection of** characters wouldn't be so bad if players could use their own juicy can't pick the right

driver for the right course. But once you've chosen a driver for a championship round, you can't switch drivers between races. In other words, you have to race the same character, with the same strengths and limitations, through both choppy straightaways in the Bahamas and narrow turns in New York.

**This strange glitch is made** even worse by the fact that you can't save your progress between races. So if you win the first three races of a championship, and then the final race,

you'll need to race all four over again. It's an irritating and artificial way to inject more calories into an anorexic title.

**There are three other modes** besides the championship, but none of them are particularly exciting. The Tricks & Techniques mode, for instance, requires mastery of the game's broad selection of three—yes, three—tricks, which consist of the less-than-thrilling "bunny hop" plus some loops and barrel rolls off the ramps. Ideally, these sorts of tricks would come in handy in the regular

races, but since pulling stunts only adds a few seconds to the clock and often costs you vital speed, there is little reason to waste time on them.

**In other scenarios, you'll** collect balloons, race against the clock and often costs you vital speed, there is little reason to waste time on them.

### Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: GIGAWATT DEVELOPER: GIGAWATT RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC. GAME RATING: PLAYERS 1-2 ONLINE NO SCORES

**GRAPHICS 5**

Ranges broadly from the average to the ordinary

**SOUND 4**

Engines whine over aimless pop noodling

**CONTROL 7**

Three brutal beats for the Grounds

**GAMEPLAY 3**

Good news: it'll be over in a matter of hours

**Score: 4**

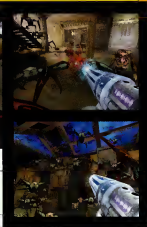


Note to self: When developing next first-person shooter, avoid hand-to-hand weapons and lock-on play at all costs.



## The Spawn of KISS

As any good KISS fan should already be well aware, Spawn's creator Todd McFarlane has made it one of his goals in life to place the "ever enduring rock band" KISS in the pantheon of comic history with the Image Comics published KISS: Psycho Circus. A monthly publication, KISS: Psycho Circus opts to plumb "the deepest, darkest corners of the imagination" rather than rocking 'n' rolling all night and recovering all day.



# KISS: Psycho Circus

The Nightmare Child: Now available with sins of omission included!

**U**n this day and age, it's hard to imagine what would motivate a company to publish a first-person shooter with no multiplayer mode. The deathmatch experience in a first person shooter is more than just

lacks a whole variety of other features—fun being the most apparent of them.

**The game plops you right in** the middle of a dark fantasy world with an objective that is too long and so complicated to

describe in this review. Putting the crux in a judgment-free sort of nutshell, we'll say that in order to beat the game, you must roam through a series of frightening levels while shooting hideously disfigured

circus freaks. Sounds fine: but the devil is in the details.

Psycho Circus does boast the ability to throw more enemies at a player in one shot than we've ever seen in a

Dreamcast game (barring the 70-thug brawl in Shenmue). Whenever this happens—probably due to memory limitations—you'll note that the majority of your enemies onscreen are poorly rendered creatures of the headless spider and fire-spitting doglike monster ilk. The bosses—altered circus freaks like the Fat Lady and the Cannonball Man—are sufficiently macabre and not too hard on the eyes, but their fighting skills leave something to be desired. There's little imagination either in their patterns or in how you battle them. Every confrontation turns into a mindless, boring frag-a-thon with no satisfaction guaranteed.

**The game's plotline places you** in the rotating roles of all four KISS band members. As each member, you'll complete a given

task and receive a piece of armor for your trouble, which will then transform you into an immortal something-or-other. It all has something to do with the story, which, while imaginative and complex, gets kind of lost in so much knee-jerk trigger-pulling action—and in solving goofy puzzles, as well.

Exercises in frustration, the puzzles will have you retracing your steps all over the map seeking hidden objects and passageways. Which seems out of place in a game that (by the publisher's admission) is entirely devoted to action.

KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child isn't inexcusably horrible. It just doesn't meet today's standards for FPS games, either in graphics or gameplay. And the fact that it has no online or multiplayer

gameplay to speak of is only the stale icing on an already tasteless cake.

GARRETT KENYON



another feature, it's the coup de grace. KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child lacks a multiplayer mode. But its absence is consistent with the rest of the game, as it also

**Dreamcast**

**PUBLISHER:** TAKE TWO INTERACTIVE DEVELOPER: TAKE TWO  
**THIRD PARTY:** TAKE TWO  
**PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**ONLINE MODES:** NONE  
**ESRB:** M  
**PRICE:** \$49.99

**GRAPHICS:** 6  
 Scenes and some levels are beautifully done, but textures tend to be muddy and blurry.

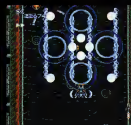
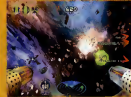
**SOUND:** 8  
 Light on the KISS, ambient soundscapes add to the creepy mood.

**CONTROL:** 5  
 Nothing special here, keep moving. No keyboard or mouse support.

**GAMEPLAY:** 5  
 Graphical shooter without a lot of depth, no online or multiplayer.

**Score: 5**

There's no denying that Bang! is a beautiful game! But while graphics are pretty and control is solid, the shooting-and-collecting-powerups ad nauseum can get a bit repetitive (or nauseating). But give it a rent and see for yourself.



Even this game's level of manic combat can't approach the most insane space shooter of all time, *Banish! Lasers for the TurboDrive*. At one point, you're firing seven lasers simultaneously in a zig-zag frenzy filling the entire screen. Now that is a big bang!

# Bang! Gunship Elite

Best played with Pop-Rocks and and a sixer of Coke

**B**ang! Gunship Elite is the sort of game that puts a happy, stupid grin on our faces. It's the kind of game that lets us crank the volume, mash on buttons and yell, "Suck it up, baby!" at the screen. It is, at heart, a classic console shooter in the tradition of *Gradius* or *R-Type*—but it's been executed with all of the spectacular graphics and effects made possible by Dreamcast.

There is a sort of a plot in *Bang!*, but any game that brings along its own exclamation point is not the game you're going to look to for things like subtle

character development. Basically, Bang! puts you into the role of a hotshot space pilot who has to shoot just about anything that moves. That's about all the motivation we needed to fill the void of space with the debris of our enemies.

**The game unfolds over 19** different missions, but there is very little variation among them. Sometimes you have to protect a convoy from marauding pilots, other times you have to spearhead an attack on an enormous capital ship. For the most part it is

indeed pretty fun, but some of the later levels swamp you with so many enemies you're simply overwhelmed—and since you can only save between levels, you might occasionally get frustrated by the repetition.

However, we were not frustrated by the controls. The Dreamcast's analog stick is perfectly suited for this kind of game, and the simplified aiming means you'll kill just about anything sighted in your crosshairs. The enemy AI, however, is rather limited. Most ships will make only the weakest efforts to evade your shots,

and some will actually take cover behind a handy nearby asteroid. For the most part, you're simply fighting battle drones.

**The nine different weapons** look and sound great, but beyond the visuals there is little imagination in the gameplay. Basically, you just shoot stuff, gather power-ups and use your shield now and then; but did we mention how pretty the game is? *Bang!* is certainly beautiful and fun to look at—but it won't give you much more than a cool callus on your trigger finger.

JIM PRESTON

Official Magazine

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: SEGA | DEVELOPER: SEGA | GENRE: ACTION | PLATFORM: DREAMCAST | ONLINE: NO | VIBRANT: YES

**GRAPHICS 9**  
Spectacular weapons and explosions. Running!

**SOUND 7**  
Weapons sound great and have much bass.

**CONTROL 7**  
Ship is easy to fly but blasting bad guys too easy.

**GAMEPLAY 5**  
Fun of firing, but soon grows all too familiar.

# Score: 6

[illegible]

<b>DR. ZIMMANY'S REVERSE INVENTOR</b>		A supposedly good sequel made only to the arcade sequel	7	Issue 10: Holiday
<b>SHARPLET LINDSAY</b> Winfrey		A good sequel that only differs from its popcultural nature	7	Issue 6: 3rd of April
<b>PC</b>				
<b>THE MACHINIST</b> Gernsbein		Held together by quality of graphics and a big budget.	6	Issue 4: May 1st April
<b>INDEPENDENT GUNNERY</b> Gernsbein		Not looking like top-200 PC with internal strategy	6	Issue 3: 2nd of April
<b>DRAGON QUEST</b> Gernsbein		Only completed dragon-crawler game, good characters	7	Issue 3: 2nd of April
<b>DRAGON QUEST II: THE OTTOMAN</b> Gernsbein		Only sequel with more of everything than the first	7	Issue 3: 2nd of April
<b>DRAGON QUEST III: THE DAUGHTER OF LOR</b> Gernsbein		Only completed sequel to a Dragon-crawler game, to a 3rd year	7	Issue 10: Holiday
<b>DRAGON QUEST IV: THE HEART OF ADVENTURE</b> Gernsbein		The best Dragon Quest has been recently. Best ending and the 1st	10	Issue 10: Holiday
<b>DRAGON QUEST V: THE NEW FRONTIER</b> Gernsbein		Only sequel to a Dragon-crawler game, good characters	7	Issue 10: Holiday
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It's 9:00 am.

December 7, 1941.

Do you know where  
your Sega Dreamcast is?



Fly over 20 authentic WW II airplanes.



Keep in mind that even if you do run into the enemy, you should not throw away your plane in a futile attack.

Challenge your dogfighting skills in 17 unique missions.



Realistic instrumentation puts you in control of your craft 24/7.

If you know what's good for you, soldier, you're hooked into that Sega Dreamcast defending the good of American Navy from the enemy's surprise attack. And if you can stop 'em there, you'll have to escort those B-29s in their definitive attack on the largest naval fleet in the Pacific. I ain't talkin' 'bout no walk in the park here, soldier; this is an all out adrenaline rush of aerial combat. WW II style. Just an Ace and his machine. Two creatures forged from burning metal, moving as one. So strap into that Sega Dreamcast, soldier, and get ready to become one of the boys; one of the Iron Aces.

**IRON ACES**



# Welcome to the ultimate code experience...

We pored over past issues. We scoured the Internet. We dusted off the back library of games. And when we were done, we had compiled the largest listing of codes in **ODCM** history. Now, we could have just slapped these on the page—but we decided to do something a little more interesting. We decided to make a **mini codebook**. Or rather, we decided to let YOU make an official **ODCM** Mini Codebook™. Flip to the end for instructions on how to put it together.

Of course, if you're not into crafts or you don't want to cut up your magazine, it might be a little hard to find the codes, since they're arranged in a way that'll actually let you make the book. So we've compiled this handy index: if you're looking for a game, here's the mini codebook page where you'll find the info.

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<b>Aerodancing</b> .....	2	<b>NBA 2K</b> .....	7	<b>Soul Fighter</b> .....	13
<b>Aerowings 2</b> .....	2	<b>NBA 2K 1</b> .....	7	<b>South Park:</b>	
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<b>Draconus</b> .....	3	<b>Plasma Sword</b> .....	10	<b>Tee Off Golf</b> .....	14
<b>Dynamite Cop</b> .....	3	<b>Power Stone</b> .....	10	<b>Test Drive 6</b> .....	14
<b>ESPN Track and Field</b> .....	3	<b>Psychic Force 2012</b> .....	10	<b>Tokyo Xtreme Racer</b> .....	14
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<b>Ferrari 355</b> .....	3	<b>Quake 3 Arena</b> .....	10	<b>Tony Hawk's</b>	
<b>Fighting Force 2</b> .....	3	<b>Rainbow 6</b> .....	10	<b>Pro Skater</b> .....	14
<b>Grand Theft Auto</b> .....	3	<b>ReVolt</b> .....	10	<b>Tony Hawk's</b>	
<b>Gundam Side Story</b> .....	4	<b>Ready 2 Rumble</b> .....	11	<b>Pro Skater 2</b> .....	15
<b>Hidden and Dangerous</b> .....	4	<b>Ready 2 Rumble:</b>		<b>Toy Commander</b> .....	15
<b>House of the Dead 2</b> .....	4	<b>Round 2</b> .....	11	<b>Trickstyle</b> .....	15
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<b>Magforce Racing</b> .....	5	<b>Seventh Cross</b> .....	12	<b>Wild Metal Country</b> .....	16
<b>Maken X</b> .....	5	<b>Shadow Man</b> .....	12	<b>Zombie Revenge</b> .....	16
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## Ultimate Online Resource

As we scoured the web for codes, we found ourselves going back again and again to one site, formerly [www.gamesages.com](http://www.gamesages.com) and now <http://codes.ign.com>. In retrospect, it's no surprise, since the site is run by ODCM's own code guru, Noah Massey. Anyway, if you're looking for the latest codes online—always tested—point yer browser to <http://codes.ign.com>























# HOW TO ASSEMBLE YOUR OFFICIAL ODCM MINI CODEBOOK™!

You have the power...now find a stapler and a pair of scissors and get to work

**Putting together your codebook is simple. First,** just cut each page out along the dotted line. Keep the pages in the same order that they were in the magazine. Now fold them in the center (you may want to fold each sheet individually). Fold the pages so that the inside of the fold has an even number on the left, and a higher odd number on the right. Flip through the book to make sure the pages are all in the right order.

Now, you need to staple the center of the codebook. And sadly, your average Swingline just isn't going to reach the center where you want to put the staples. So what do you do? In a pinch, you can just staple the left edge

(fig. 1), straight through the side. This will reduce the margins inside the book, but it's probably the quickest and easiest solution.

The second strategy is to fold over one half of the book so that the stapler can reach the center (fig. 2). Unfortunately, this method ends up leaving half of your pages creased.

Finally, you can go out and drop \$40 on an extended reach stapler that can reach the center without folding any pages. OR you can head to a copy center like Kinko's, and ask to use their big extended reach stapler (fig.3). They probably won't even charge you for the staples, once they see how cool your codebook is.



Fig. 1.

This is the easiest way to assemble your codebook. Just put a couple of staples through the side, as close to the spine as you can. This makes the book a little harder to use, but it'll still work and look okay.



Fig. 2.

By folding over half of the pages, you can staple the book in the center of the spine like a magazine (this is called "saddlestitching, FYI), which looks and works great. Except that those pages tend to stay folded. Gr...



Fig. 3.

The ultimate solution is to find an extended reach stapler like this one, which can reach all the way to the middle of the spine for a neat look without bending any pages. You can find these staplers at most full service copy shops.



What if cigarette ads told the truth?



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FORGET ALL THE HEALTH RISKS. If The  
Beautiful People Do It, It Must Be Okay!

1.2 mg of "Hey, I'm addicted!" 200 mg of "I'm cool, right?" and 2000 mg  
of "I'm livin' dangerously so I must be sexy."



# Talk Back

## The Official ODCM Interview

**Welcome to TalkBack, the first in an occasional series of interviews with the movers and shakers that make the Dreamcast world so great. This time, we spoke with two members of the crack *Soul Reaver* team: Lead Programmer Marc David and Senior Designer Riley Cooper.**

**ODCM:** *Soul Reaver* looked great. Can we expect to see many improvements in SR2, in terms of graphics?

**Marc David:** We've redone the graphics system quite a bit, and I think we've done an excellent job. The main improvement is in the amount of polygons that we're able to push on the SR2 engine. We're rendering 50,000 polygons at 60 frames a second. This is a huge improvement over SR1 on the Dreamcast (it rendered 10,000 [polys] per frame at best). This allows us to have more realistic and engaging environments. We've also redone the

special effects system, which is incredibly feature packed. I think you'll be really pleased when you see all the great effects it can achieve. Finally, I'd like to note that we've been able to do many more algorithmic effects, such as realtime IK and cloth simulation, to add a higher level of realism. Look for *Soul Reaver 2* to be a huge jump in quality from *Soul Reaver 1* on all fronts.

**ODCM:** What improvements can we expect to see in gameplay? Will puzzles be easier? Harder? What about all those blocks?

**Riley Cooper:** You can expect a lot of improvements in gameplay. For starters, the game will always be running at 60 frames per second on both the Dreamcast and the PS2. This will improve every aspect of the gameplay experience, but especially in combat—we can have more enemies onscreen at any given time. On top of that, we've also improved the AI so the fighting will be more fun overall.

Other great improvements in gameplay affect the puzzles. For example, we are being very careful not to put players in situations where it isn't clear what they need to do next. Also, in SR1, we were sometimes criticized for having too many block puzzles. So we've worked hard to introduce many new puzzle-related objects for Razeel to interact with throughout the game. This enables us to increase the complexity of the puzzles in the game, to keep up with the players' growing puzzle-solving ability.

**ODCM:** *Soul Reaver* ended in a cliffhanger. Does SR2 complete at last this chapter in the saga?

**RC:** That and much more. That chapter is addressed right away, and it opens into the heart of the SR2 story—which involves time travel. In this game, Razeel travels throughout Nosgoth's history, uncovering for the fans more of Razeel and Kalin's past.

**ODCM:** Without giving anything away, what can we expect from the story this time around?

**RC:** In addition to what we feel is one of the cooler videogame story endings ever, you can expect a much more full story throughout. It includes both back story elements that are communicated through murals, allowing the player to learn about them at their leisure, as well as more important elements of the story that directly guide Razeel's actions. Besides that, you should notice that every aspect of the game's design is driven by the story. SR1 was story driven, but it had many aspects that were somewhat formulaic. This time around, just about everything that we're creating has been inspired by the story itself—which means that we've created a much more cohesive and original experience.





## DRIVER A


- Greets colleagues with a firm self-confident handshake.
- Dated cheerleaders in high school.
- Has lipstick on underwear.
- Smokes after sex.



Welcome to Metropolis Street Racer where going fast isn't enough, you've gotta go fast and look good. MSR is the only racing game where you're judged on KUDOS (points based on style) as well as speed. MSR also features amazing recreations of real cities: London, Tokyo, and San Francisco are shown in incredible detail, right down to the street signs and radio stations. So check out Metropolis Street Racer and see if you've got what it takes to maintain a 100 image at 180 mph.



- Offers a limp and clammy handshake that screams of self doubt.
- Wasn't allowed to date in high school.
- Has superheroes on underwear.
- Apologizes after sex.



sega.com/msr







TAKING HELL TO  
THE NEXT LEVEL.

# SPAWN

In The Demon's Hand



Todd McFarlane's blockbuster comic book characters come to life on Sega Dreamcast. Compete in the four-player simultaneous Battle Royal mode. Includes the original Arcade Mode and tournament style Dreamcast Mode. All your favorite characters from the Spawn series are faithfully recreated in the ultimate death match challenge.

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Rated Mature  
Some Material May  
Be Offensive to  
Some

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